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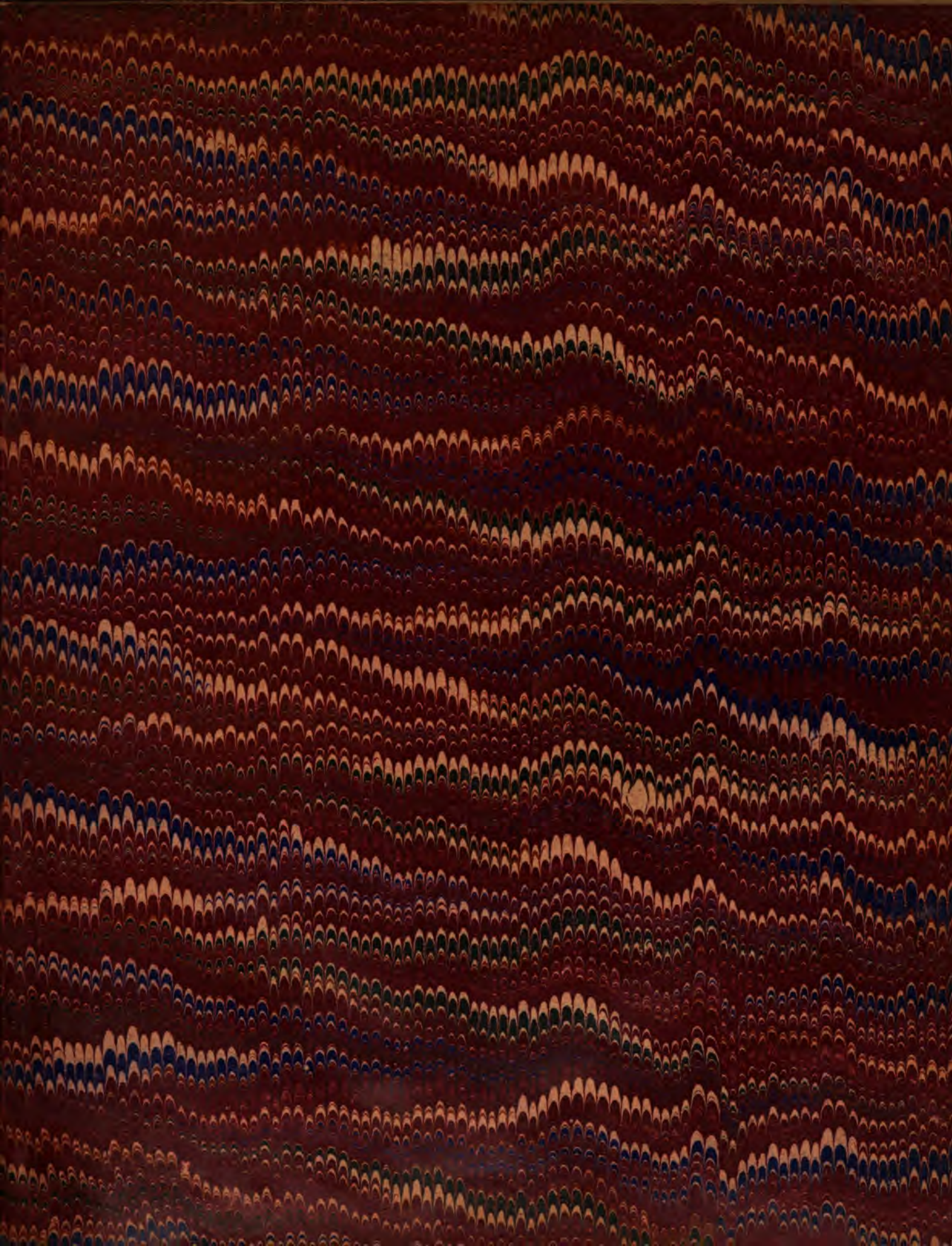
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DEANERY OF BICESTER.

PART I.

EARLY HISTORY.

HISTORY

OF THE PRESENT

DEANERY OF BICESTER, OXON.

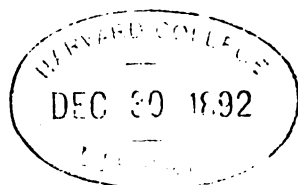
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J. C. BLOMFIELD, M.A.
RECTOR OF LAUNTON, AND RURAL DEAN.

"Providence, by the hands of my worthy friends, having placed me for the present at Waltham Abbey, I conceive that in our general work of abbeys I owe some particular description of that place of my abode; hoping my endeavours herein may prove exemplary to others (who dwell in the sight of remarkable monasteries) to do the like, and rescue the observables of their habitations from the teeth of time, and oblivion."—*Fuller's History of Waltham Abbey*, (*Church History*, vol. iii. p. 519, *Ed. Clar.*)

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
SIZE and Altitudes	1	Mæرتون (Merton)	29
Physical Geography	<i>ib.</i>	Langeton (Launton)	30
Drainage and Water Supply	2	Stratton	<i>ib.</i>
Rainfall and Temperature	3	Newton	<i>ib.</i>
Aboriginal Inhabitants	<i>ib.</i>	Petintone (Piddington). Erncote (Arncot)	<i>ib.</i>
		Blecesdone, Blicestone (Bletchington)	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Period	4	Godendon (Goddington)	31
Roman Roads	5, 7, 8, 12	Feeringford (Fringford)	<i>ib.</i>
Jacob's Stone on Ottmoor	6	Bentone (Bainton)	<i>ib.</i>
Earthworks at Stratton	7	Saxenton	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Station	8	Uninhabited Country	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Encampments	11	Finemere (Finnere)	<i>ib.</i>
Skimming Dish	12	Meoxberie (Mixbury)	32
Roman Battles	13, 15	Juniper Hill	<i>ib.</i>
Caversfield	14	Torenesmere (Tusmore)	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Dwellings	16	Sulthorn (Souldern)	<i>ib.</i>
Caulcot	17	Hethe	<i>ib.</i>
Chilgrove	<i>ib.</i>	Fulwell, Woolaston	33
Fringford Lodge	<i>ib.</i>	Sevewelle (Shelswell)	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Bath at Middleton	18	Coteford (Cottisford)	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Potteries	<i>ib.</i>	Fertwell (Fritwell)	<i>ib.</i>
Roman Barrows	19	Herdwic (Hardwick)	34
Ploughley Hill	<i>ib.</i>	Stoke	<i>ib.</i>
Round Hill	20	Ardulvesley (Ardley)	<i>ib.</i>
Other Tumuli	<i>ib.</i>	Fewcott	<i>ib.</i>
Other Burial Places	<i>ib.</i>	Bukenhulle (Bucknell)	<i>ib.</i>
Wendlebury	21	Haiforde (Heyford, Lower)	35
Remains of Station	22	Hegford (Heyford, Upper)	<i>ib.</i>
Appearance of the Ground	24	Powdele (Poodle)	<i>ib.</i>
		Powdon (Poundon)	<i>ib.</i>
Britons and Saxons	<i>ib.</i>	Blakethurne (Blackthorn)	<i>ib.</i>
Ambrosden	<i>ib.</i>	Odmoor (Otmoor)	36
Graven-hulle	25	Otendon (Oddington)	<i>ib.</i>
The Wattle-bank, or Aves-ditch	<i>ib.</i>	Burnewood	<i>ib.</i>
Alchester	27	Muswell	37
		Boarstall	<i>ib.</i>
The English Conquest	<i>ib.</i>	The Marsh	38
English Settlements	<i>ib.</i>	Rockwood	<i>ib.</i>
Local Nomenclature	28	Lillingston	39
Chesterton	<i>ib.</i>	Conversion of the English Settlers to Christianity	<i>ib.</i>
Weston	<i>ib.</i>	Kirklington (Kirtlington)	41
Burne-ceaster (Bicester)	<i>ib.</i>	Later Settlements	<i>ib.</i>
Burne-hulle (Bignell)	29	Formation of Villages	42
Wrec-wic (Wretchwick)	<i>ib.</i>	West Saxon Kingdom	43
Somerton	<i>ib.</i>	This district conquered by Mercia	43
Midlington (Middleton)	<i>ib.</i>	Reconquered by the West Saxons	44

	PAGE		PAGE
The Hundreds	44	Local Effects of the Conquest on Land	60
County of Oxon	45	On Population	<i>ib.</i>
Ecclesiastical Divisions, Parishes	<i>ib.</i>	Increased Value of Land	62
Deaneries	46	Norman Lords and their Tenants	<i>ib.</i>
Rural Dean of Burncestre	<i>ib.</i>	Other Norman Landowners	63
The Danes	47	Norman Castles	64
Anglo-Saxon Churches	49	Norman Churches	65
Meeting of the Witenagemot	<i>ib.</i>	Transition from Norman to Early English (1175—1200).	67
The English Kings	50	Hundred of Ploughley	<i>ib.</i>
Æthelred II.	51	Diocese of Lincoln	68
Eadward, King and Confessor	<i>ib.</i>	Rural Deaneries, alteration of	<i>ib.</i>
State of this District in King Eadward's Reign	53	Patronage of Churches	69
Landowners	<i>ib.</i>	Assignment of Churches to Monasteries	70
Earldom of Gyrth	54	Private Patronage	<i>ib.</i>
Early Norman Period	<i>ib.</i>	Dedication of Churches	71
The Conqueror regrants to Wigod his Land	55	Chapels and Chantries	72
Grants of Land to Normans	<i>ib.</i>	Village Feasts	<i>ib.</i>
Bishop Odo	56	Church or Lamb Ale	73
The Countess Judith	<i>ib.</i>	Incomes of Churches	<i>ib.</i>
Earl of Evreux	<i>ib.</i>	Architecture of Churches	75
William de Warene	<i>ib.</i>	Early English (1200—1275)	<i>ib.</i>
Geoffrey de Mandeville	<i>ib.</i>	Decorated, Early, with Geometrical Tracery (1275—1325)	77
Walter Giffard	<i>ib.</i>	Decorated, Late, with Flowing Tracery (1325—1375)	<i>ib.</i>
Earl Hugh	<i>ib.</i>	Perpendicular (1375—1525)	<i>ib.</i>
Others	57	Low Side-Windows	78
Ecclesiastical Property	<i>ib.</i>	Domestic Architecture	79
First Norman Bishop in England	<i>ib.</i>	Church Bells	<i>ib.</i>
The Heirs of Wigod	<i>ib.</i>	Churchyard Crosses	<i>ib.</i>
Robert of Oily	58	Market Crosses	<i>ib.</i>
Roger of Ivry	<i>ib.</i>	Destroyed Churches	80
The Great Survey	59	Desecrated Cemeteries	<i>ib.</i>

EARLY HISTORY.

SIZE AND ALTITUDES.

THE little spot on God's great earth, of which this book purposes to record the history, contains an area of about eight square miles. It is part of the outer edge of the wide table-land, which rises in the centre of this island, having a difference of five hundred feet between the elevation of its highest point (Muswell Hill, seven hundred and forty-four feet above the mean level of the sea) and its lowest (the brook below Bicester, two hundred and fifteen feet). The following altitudes were taken by the Ordnance Survey in 1874:—

Altitudes^a of Bench Marks above mean sea-level at Liverpool.

<i>Places.</i>	<i>Feet.</i>	<i>Places.</i>	<i>Feet.</i>
Mixbury	338	Ambrosden	223
(Westbury Church nearest point of levelling to Mixbury.)		Weston	240
Fritwell	417	Merton	221
Stoke Lyne	385	Somerton	334
Stratton Audley	275	Upper Heyford	282
Middleton Stoney	315	Lower Heyford	265
Bicester	242	Kirtlington	335

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

The geology of this district presents the three distinct features which everywhere mark the Oolitic districts of central England^b. The Great or Bath Oolite formation, resting on the upper Lias clay and Marlstone (which outcrops on the north-west corner), overlays the north and north-west parts in large beds. This is mostly made up of cream-coloured rubbly limestones, often thin-bedded and earthy, which are interstratified with, and pass into, rubbly marls. *Cornbrash*, the highest member of the Lower Oolite, forms a broad plateau, extending from west to east in the centre. This formation is in most places a group of limestones, either rubbly, or solid and thick-bedded, which are blue internally, but weather to a cream-colour or brown. Here are also found occasional thin beds of sandy marl, from which fossils may be dislodged in a perfect state. In these strata the pretty little shell *Avicula Echinata*, typical of the Cornbrash, is found in great numbers; and here also the gigantic, and hitherto unrivalled, bones of the *Ceteosaurus*^c were discovered.

^a They are determined by the Bench Marks, which will be found cut upon the Churches in all the places mentioned except Middleton, where the mark is made on the Post Office in the village, thus 丏

^b For minute geological details see "The Geology of the country round Banbury, Woodstock, Bicester and Buck-

ingham," by A. H. Green, M.A., F.G.S., with sheet No. 45 of the map of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, published by order, 1864.

^c At Kirtlington; now preserved in the Museum at Oxford.

Between the plateaus of the Great Oolite and Cornbrash, there is an outcrop of Forest Marble. Above the Cornbrash comes a thick mass of pale blue clay or shale, weathering yellow at the surface, with here and there thin beds or nodules of earthy limestones, the *Clunch Clay* of Smith, or *Oxford Clay* of other authors. This covers a broad belt of land in the south and south-east parts of this district, and contributes its characteristic fossils, belemnites, all more or less water-worn and broken, and oysters, which being much stronger than the belemnites are often uninjured. In the Oxford Clay three very distinct forms of the clays and gravels of the Boulder or Glacial period appear.

1. Clean gravels, without any admixture of clay.
2. Stiff blue clay, with few pebbles, and here and there large angular ice-scratched boulders.
3. Clayey and dirty gravels.

The low-level, or valley-gravels, are composed chiefly of the detritus of the surrounding Oolitic strata, and in these are found fragments of the tusks and teeth of the elephant and rhinoceros^d, as well as pebbles derived from the more ancient drift, such as quartz, flint, and hornstone. Occasionally we meet with blocks of slate, igneous rocks^e, and small pieces of gneiss and granite. The pebbles are for the most part well-rounded, and not very large, with a few larger half-angular blocks, and there is well-marked, though irregular, bedding.

At one spot, in the south-east corner of the district, and beyond it, there is an outlier of the *Lower Greensand*^f, consisting of sands for the most part ferruginous, with iron-sandstone, and iron-stone, many coloured clays and fullers' earth, and occasional beds of ochre; and at another an outlier of the Upper Oolite, consisting of patches of *Portland Beds*, capped by *Lower Greensand*, with a very thin layer of the *Purbeck Beds* between. These outliers are well marked, both by the rise of the ground where the higher beds come on, and by the many springs that flow from them, the water being thrown out by the Kimmeridge clay below.

Hence have arisen those natural features which this district presents. The clays and limestones, of which the Oolitic series is composed, being brought in turn to the surface, the softer strata have yielded to denudation, and thus have been formed valleys, and gently undulating plains; while the harder limestones have remained to form the table-lands, which rise to the north-west, and end with a sharp cliff-like edge at their junction with the clays below^g. A thick covering of drift having settled over the south and south-east portions, these features are hid, and nothing but a sameness of outline appears thereabouts.

The decomposition of each of these separate formations is of a distinctive agricultural character, and has caused that variety of soil which is found within the compass of this district.

DRAINAGE AND WATER SUPPLY.

The drainage of the Great Oolite and underlying Lias beds, is chiefly to the west^h, but that of its north-east limb, and of the Cornbrash, is to the eastⁱ. The drainage of the clay district is entirely southwards^k, but is greatly impeded by the long and circuitous course of many of the

^d In the valley of the Cherwell, and along the course of the Ray, on Ottmoor.

^e "When the railway-cutting was being made at the foot of Poundon Hill, the workmen came upon a vein of coal(?), some of which they took to a house near, and found it burnt as well as ordinary coal."—*Oxford Chronicle*, Oct. 24, 1846.

^f This may be seen along the road over Muswell Hill; and just outside the village of Brill, on the road to Muswell Hill, there are pits in this formation, which are worked for brick-making.

^g As seen at Somerton and Souldern.

^h Into the river Cherwell.

ⁱ Into the Ouse.

^k Into the Ray, and thence into the Thames.

brooks through which it runs. Those parts of this district which lie by the side of its largest streams have been always liable to floods, but it may be questioned whether in early times they were as much so as now. When there were no mills (there are at the present time three hundred and eighty on the Thames alone) or weirs or dams, and the bed of the rivers had not been raised by the deposit of solid refuse, discharged from the towns upon their banks, the waters collected in the valleys ran off much sooner than now; and if any efficient plan of draining the Thames valley be ever carried out, the floods now so frequent in the valley of the Cherwell, and the low-lying land on either side of the Ray, will be again much lessened.

Several springs of good water never cease to flow in the Cornbrash and Oolite districts. A few only are found in those parts of the clay district which border on the Cornbrash. In the other parts the rock is seldom reached, and the only water-supply is from the surface, or from artificial wells dug in the clay-bed. In the latter case it is generally tainted, and unfit for use.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE.

The present yearly average rainfall of this district is about 24.03 inches, which is a little below that of the surrounding country; the average rainfall of England and Wales being computed at 32 inches = 723,904 gallons per acre. The chief of it comes with south and south-west winds, these yielding more than half of the measured quantity.

The mean temperature is something under 50°.

ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS.

The first occupiers of this district were a branch of the great Celtic family, the Belgic Gauls, who by various immigrations had made themselves masters of this island¹. Three of their expeditions hither have been established by a variety of data, and may be regarded as undoubted facts; and these, though the date cannot be exactly fixed, are generally supposed to have taken place in B.C. 360, B.C. 130, and B.C. 85. Those Belgæ who settled in the central parts of the country, were soon distinguished as the *Middle Belgæ*, and they formed the most powerful kingdom, and were styled Britons *par excellence*. In course of time they broke up into separate tribes, or petty kingdoms, each adopting a distinctive name. One of these, the *Dobuni*^m (or *Boduni*ⁿ, as Dion Cassius calls them), i.e. the Lowlanders, gradually extended their territory from the hills bordering on the river Severn to those on the north-east side of the Thames, thus taking possession of all the land which makes up the modern counties of Gloucester and Oxford. This district therefore lay at the north-east corner of their territory, as it bordered on the *Cassivelauni* (or *Catyeuchlani*, as the tribe is called in Ptolemy), who inhabited the modern Buckinghamshire, and to whom, after some interval, it was subjected. These two tribes alternately held this border-land as part of their acknowledged territory, but there is no evidence of their having inhabited it. The wild horse, the elk, the bison, wolves and boars innumerable, and a few stray beavers^o roamed at leisure amid its waste of heath and

¹ The inhabitants of Gaul were all alike Celts, and the whole country was divided into two portions, *Gallia Belgica*, and *Gallia Celtica*. The Celtic Gauls made military expeditions to the East, for which they are so celebrated in history from B.C. 395 to B.C. 278, while the Belgic Gauls alone made expeditions to the West, i.e. to Britain.

^m The name is derived from *Doffen*, a British word signifying 'low' or 'deep.'

ⁿ The word *Bodo*, or *Bodun*, had among the Gauls the same meaning as *Doffen* had among the Britons.

^o From Berkshire, where they abounded.

moor and sunless woodland, but no human inhabitant had as yet set up his dwelling within it. Our Celtic ancestors were, as Cæsar tells us, half-cultivators and half-hunters. The inhabitants of the open plains of the south-east parts of the country were tillers of the soil, while the dwellers in other parts were generally mere pastoral nomads, moving from one spot of ground to another, depending for their livelihood on what they could take in hunting, and fortifying certain spots, generally the tops of hills, that they might retreat to these in case of invasion or any danger. Nothing has been found within this district to tell of inclosure, or fortified places, or of anything betokening home or residence at that distant age^p. The only existing memorials of the British occupiers are just such as might be looked for in a country uninhabited: 1. trackways, along which the Romans afterwards formed their roads; 2. the streams; and 3. fords through the streams, to which, in still later times, the English gave names. The streams necessarily attracted chief attention, and to these the Britons gave distinctive names. But that the various physical features of the surrounding country still remained quite unknown these names testify, for they are only such as describe some peculiarity in the stream to which each was given. The rapidity, or more probably the windings, of one marked it out as differing from others, and this was therefore named *Cher-well*, i.e. the rapid or winding water^q. Another was seen at times to overflow its banks, and this was called *Rea*, or *Ray*, the 'overflowing water'; while a third, which presented no striking peculiarity, was called by the common name of *Uisge*, *Ouse*, 'the water'.

ROMAN PERIOD.

It was not therefore until the time of the Roman occupation that any attempt was made towards occupying this district with fixed habitations. Cæsar, in his two expeditions into Britain did not reach the country north of the Thames, but in the third invasion under Aulus Plautius, A.D. 43, this part of the island was undoubtedly subjugated. All that is really known about this third invasion is contained in the account given by Dion Cassius (lib. ix. § 19), and though various opinions have been given as to the line of Aulus Plautius's march as there

^p The nearest remains of British habitation are the Rollright stones, the Hoarstone at Enstone, and the four camps at Nadbury, Madmarston, Tadmarton, and Ilbury, near Banbury.

^q The Sansc. root *car* (Latin *curro*) branches out into two different meanings, that of going fast, and that of going round. Hence the river-names from this root have in some cases the sense of *rapidity*, as the Yare in England, the Garry, the Yarrow, in Scotland, the Garonne in France, &c.; and in others that of *tortuousness*, as the Char in Dorsetshire, the Chor in Lancashire, the Kerr in Middlesex, the Caron in Scotland, the *Cher* in France. See Ferguson's "River Names of Europe," 1862.

^r From the Sansc. *ri*, 'to flow,' Gr. *ῥέω*, Lat. *riġo*.

This stream is said to have been called in later times by the Romans *Burus*, 'the Bure,' but there is no known record where it is so called.

"The last of all is the *Reie* (alias *Bure*), whose head is not far from *Burcester*, &c. By overflowing was it in time past called *Rhe*, by such Saxons as inhabited the island; and even to this day in *Essex* I have oft observed that when the lower grounds by rage of water have been overflowed,

the people beholding the same have said, 'All is on a Rhe,' as if they should have said, 'All is now a river.'"—*Harison's England*, vol. i. c. x.

^s Among the Celtic words denoting water, one is *wisk*, or *wish*. This appears in Welsh as *wisg*, and in Irish as *uisg*. The English words *ooze*, and *wash*, and possibly also *gush*, would seem to be different forms of the same. The well-known term *Whisky* means, it is conceived, originally 'the water,' what in France is expressly called *eau de vie*. The forms in which we meet with this root (which Ferguson derives from the Sanscrit *ux* or *uks*, 'to water'), are indeed manifold. It occurs as the Ash, the Axe, the Exe, the Ouse, the Isis, the Wisk, and the Usk. See "Names of Places in Wiltshire," by Rev. W. H. Jones, Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon.

The Ouse gave its name to Oxford (*Ousen-ford*, i.e. 'the river's ford,') and Oseney (*Ousen-ey*, i.e. 'the river's island,' *eye* being the old word for 'island'). *Ousen-ford* had no special meaning for the Anglo-Saxon, and so the word was soon corrupted into *Oxnaford* or *Oxena-ford*, which was not only intelligible, but also probably appropriate.

described¹, the following appears to be a fair and well-supported conjecture concerning it: that he traversed, first, all the territory south of the Thames till he came near its source; that there he established a station, which afterwards grew into a city, *Corinium* (the modern Cirencester); that, having made peace with the inhabitants of the country, the *Dobuni*, he crossed to the north bank of the river, to commence his return march along it; that no incident of importance occurred till he came to a spot where his progress eastwards was stopped by a range of high hills (the Chilterns); that two courses then lay before him, either to gain the summit of the hills, and trust to his chance of fighting his way through the territory of the *Cassivelauni*, or to pass again to the south side of the Thames, and return by the same route which he had taken on the advance; that in this dilemma he halted, and that a convenient spot for an encampment presenting itself in the angle formed by the junction of two streams, he at once occupied it (calling it *Dorocina*); that from this point he crossed the river to attack the Britons, who were entrenched on the opposite side in a fortress, which they had formed on the top of a hill, nearly 250 ft. above the level of the plain beneath, (called by Leland by the name which he found current in the local tradition, *Sinodun*); that some fighting then took place on the level ground on the east side of this hill, and was followed by an attack on the hill-fortress, which must have fallen into Aulus Plautius's hands before he continued his march; that, pursuing the Britons who retreated eastwards, the Roman general fought a second battle with them, probably at Kingston-on-Thames, and that there, forbearing to follow the fugitives in hostile and unexplored country, he encamped on the south side of the Thames (probably on Wimbledon Common), waiting for reinforcements; that, as soon as these arrived, he again passed over to the north bank of the Thames, and took the chief city of the *Trinobantes* (the allies of the *Cassivelauni*), namely Colchester, and that thus the country on either side of the Thames' valley was made subject to the Roman power².

The establishment of a military camp at *Dorocina* (now Dorchester), during this march of the Romans, is especially to be noted, as it subsequently much affected this district, from which it was only distant sixteen miles. It was probably at first only a temporary encampment, sufficient to accommodate as many soldiers as could be left behind to garrison it, but it soon grew into a permanent station, from which the imperial power of Rome gradually spread itself over the surrounding district.

ROMAN ROADS, NO. I.

As soon as the Romans were permanently established at *Dorocina*, they set about opening direct communication with their other stations. Accordingly they soon made a road to

¹ See "The Campaign of Aulus Plautius," by Edwin Guest, LL.D., Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, published in the "Archæological Journal" for Sept. 1866 (vol. xxiii. p. 159.) The view which this author takes is that "a certain river," through which, according to Dion Cassius, the Romans swam to engage the Britons, is the Thames at Wallingford; and that "the Thames" mentioned as the scene of a second battle was in reality the river Lea.

Bishop Kennett, disclaiming, but displaying "the vanity of assuming honour to these parts," has built up a fanciful history, (1) that Julius Cæsar in his second expedition crossed the Thames at Wallingford, and so came within

the limits of this county of Oxford, and (2) that "a certain river," mentioned by Dion Cassius, was the Ouse, at or near Buckingham. (See Par. Ants., chaps. ii. and iii.) Browne Willis in his "History of the Town of Buckingham," chap. iii., has adopted, as if it were fact, Dr. Kennett's fancy.

² This description of Aulus Plautius's march is taken from a lecture by James Parker, Esq., of Oxford, upon "The Roman Occupation of Dorchester," delivered at the first meeting of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, Michaelmas Term, 1868, and printed among the publications of that Society.

join the Watling Street, the great road which ran across the island from the port of *Rutupiæ* (Richborough) to *Deva* (Chester), at the point where it came nearest to them, the town of *Lactodorum* (now Towcester*). Proceeding from the camp at *Dorocina* through the modern villages of Marsh Baldon and Headington Quarries, this road enters this district at Beckley, from which it runs across Ottmoor towards Fencot, along what is still a road, and called by the country people, "the Roman road." There is about a mile and half of it in the moor, part of which is still plainly raised above the level of the ground on each side, and covered with a firm layer of stones. In other places the stones have been removed, and may be seen scattered about in great numbers lying near the road. Passing to the west of Fencot, its course may still be indistinctly traced on the surface at intervals, by the stones spread about, as far as Strettle, or Struthill (Street-Hill), where the name fixes its position. Thence it proceeded through a stony ford over a small brook, where a quantity of stones are found in the clay, both in the bank and at the bottom, westwards of the hill, on which the village of Merton now stands. Here traces of the road are distinctly visible, it having been dug through, and carried away here and there. Thence it passed along the road now leading from Wendlebury in a straight line to Bicester; thence on the west side of the town along the present footpath leading from King's End to Crockwell, under the wall of Bicester House; thence along the present Buckingham-road as far as the side-road turning to Launton; thence it was continued in a straight line near Hungrill Farm, where a stone wall now bounds the field lying south of the house, towards Stratton; thence on the south side of that village, where faint traces of an embankment are still discoverable[†], upwards to the hill, whence the road leads towards Chetwode; thence through the valley between Chetwode and Newton, along part of the road leading from the latter to Finmere; thence straight past the house now called "The Red Lion Inn," along the present bridle-way to Water-Stratford, where its course is quite unmistakeable; and thence to Stowe, &c., until it reached the modern Towcester; whence, at a short distance, a second road diverged to *Magiovintum* (Fenny Stratford). From there being no mention of this road in the Itinerary of Antoninus (which was probably written at the close of the second century), it may be inferred that it was not then made, and that it therefore dates from the beginning of the third century.

JACOB'S STONE ON OTTMOOR.

At the end of each mile (=1,000 paces=1,611 yards, and therefore 149 yards less than our English mile) a milestone (*milliarium*) was generally placed on the main roads. These

* A very accurate account of this road forms the subject of a paper read to "The Ashmolean Society" in Oxford, on Nov. 9, 1840, by the Rev. Robert Hussey, Student of Christ Church, and has been printed among the publications of that Society.

† Dr. Stukeley describes this road in one part of this district as "having been elevated into a ridge of 100 ft. breadth, and two little ditches all along the sides."—*Iter*, ii. p. 38, ed. 1724.

Mr. Hussey says, "When this ridge was opened, it was found to be made of broken stones laid on a bed of black mould. The bed of stones may be found in any part by thrusting a stick a few inches into the turf on it; but probably the greater part of the stones which covered it have

been removed, even where they are most abundant; for it has been used as a stone-quarry by the farmers of the neighbourhood in more than one place."

Mr. Camden has confused the course of this road with the *Akeman Street*, in consequence, no doubt, of its being called so by the inhabitants of the locality. See Ordnance Map.

† In the second field, to the south of the church, and of the site of the old house of the Audleys, through which a footpath runs, there are traces of a raised bank, especially noticeable in the bend which the fences make here. The bank is also visible through the adjoining grass-field eastwards. A grass-lane in the opposite direction is still called the Roman road, probably as leading to it.

were usually plain cylinders, or short pillars of stone, bearing an inscription denoting the distance from the next town, and the name of the emperor in whose reign it was erected. These have in almost all instances perished, having been destroyed, doubtless, for the material; but it is extremely probable that the large stone, in shape like a milestone, which still stands in the centre of Ottmoor, a few yards distant from the line of this Roman road, and which of late years has been known as "Jacob's stone^a," is one of the original Roman milestones. In recent times some steps have been cut in this stone, and hence the inscription may have been destroyed.

EARTHWORKS AT STRATTON.

On the left-hand side of the road now leading from Stratton to Chetwode, just before it descends to Stratton Mill, there are evident traces of a circular bank of earth, enclosed by a ditch, on the slope of some rising ground. Here was a fort, probably erected by the Romans for the protection of their road, just before it passed into the thick woodland, which covered the country on the north and east sides of this district.

NO. II.

Two other main roads were subsequently formed through this district, quite independent of the station at *Dorocina*. One of these ran from *Eboracum* (York) to *Clausentum* (Southampton, or Bittern), and is described in the eighteenth Iter of Richard of Cirencester^b. Entering this district at its north-west corner, on the east side of the present village of Souldern, it seems to have followed the line of an old British trackway^c, between the villages of Somerton and Fritwell, where a grass road still runs, and thence along the ridge of high land overlooking the Cherwell and the villages of Upper and Lower Heyford, where the line of it is still marked, to Kirtlington. Here it ran where much of the present road through the village now runs, thence past the church, along the road to Bletchingdon; thence near the churches of Hampton Poyle and Kidlington to the fourth milestone on the road from Oxford to Banbury. Further south we find Stratfield Farm and Stratfield Brake, and these names are sufficient to prove the continuance of this road in that direction. Thence it proceeded, probably by Elsfield and Headington, towards *Dorocina*, one of the stations mentioned by Richard of Cirencester. This road was known in later times as *Portmonestred*, i.e. 'the townsmen's street,' or *Portstred*, or *Portstrete*, or *Portway*, i.e. 'the town-road, or street, or way^d.'

^a Erroneously called "Joseph's Stone" in the Ordnance Survey.

^b In this Iter he gives the distance from *Ælia Castra* to *Dorocina* as fifteen miles. Thence some have imagined, without reason, that the former place meant the military station which was formed in this district, but this is to confound it with the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road.

^c "Near the Portway, north of the village of Aynhoe, a grooved brass celt was found a few years since with a number of skeletons lying north and south. These are strong indications of residence anterior to the arrival of the Romans, and lead to the inference that the Portway in this district, as in some others, adopted the original trackway of the Britons. From the angle of the Portway, north-

east of the village, it is not improbable but a military way branched off to the camp at Rainsborough, about a mile to the north."—*Baker's History of Northamptonshire*, Part ii. p. 558, 1822—1830.

^d Port-meadow, near Oxford, is the town-meadow, sometimes called *Portman's-mead*, i.e. 'the mead of the townsmen.' In many towns the chief magistrate is called the *Port-reve*. Port occurs in the termination of towns in this sense, as e.g. Newport in the Isle of Wight, the new town which arose on the decay of Carisbrooke.

There are nine Roman roads still called *Portways* in different parts of our island. See Hartshorne's *Salopia Antiqua*, p. 272.

No. III.

After the formation of the *Ichniold Street*, the great road which led through our island from east to west, a junction-road was made from it (starting from the gap in the hills near Tring) to *Corinium* (Cirencester), on the foss-way°. This road, passing straight across this district from east to west, entered it at Sharp's Hill; thence it passed along the road now leading from Aylesbury to Bicester, over Blackthorn Hill, as far as Wretchwick, whence it proceeded to the south of that road (through the farm-yard which now occupies its site, and the field beyond, where the ridge of it is still very plain,) to the lane which runs under the north side of Gravenhill wood; thence, to avoid the marshy ground between Gravenhill and Chesterton, it was carried out of its straight course to join the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road. It then proceeded along that road for a short distance northwards, until it turned off at right angles along Chesterton-lane¹ towards Kirtlington, where, for a distance of four miles, it still remains. Thence, after crossing the Portway, it went on through Tackley, Blenheim Park, Stonesfield, &c., into Gloucestershire. Traces of this road are marked on the Ordnance Map. In later times this road was commonly called the *Akeman Street*, but it does not appear when or why this name arose. The foss-way from Cirencester led to Bath, sometimes styled by the Anglo-Saxons *Ace-mannes-ceaster*, 'the city of invalids.' This name may have been applied to the road leading to the city, *Ace-mannes-street*, and then also to the branch road in this district. But the name is certainly of comparatively recent introduction², for it is not known to occur in any Anglo-Saxon Charter.

"The name *Akeman-way*," says Dr. Stukeley, "I am fit to think a vulgar error, as commonly imagined from going to the Bath; more probably it is *Ag-maen*, 'the stony agger or ridge'; this is confirmed by the people calling the other road too, that goes north and south, by the same name, 'Akeman Street.'"

ROMAN STATION.

Thus in two separate spots within this district these Roman roads met. These junction points became, in course of time, the centre, one of the earliest civilization, and the other of the later Christianizing, of their neighbourhood.

The junction of the *Akeman Street* with the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road in the very heart of this, as yet, uninhabited district, soon suggested the establishment of a military station for the due protection of these roads, and of travellers along them. Some ground adjoining was found singularly suitable for this purpose. It was a bed of gravel, at the foot of a small isolated hill, near the confluence of two streams. The situation was low and damp, but it had the advantages of an abundant water-supply, and of facilities for its defence from the large marsh which ran round its three sides, while on its south-east side the *Akeman Street* led up

* It was continued in the opposite direction eastwards to Cambridge, thence to Ely, &c.

¹ In cutting a ditch in Chesterton-lane a few years ago, several coins and other Roman relics were found. "There are also appearances of a stony ridge running alongside of the road for some distance, where a space is left between the present road and the hedge on the south side, which might be the ancient way: and there is now to be seen in the bank of the ditch close to the bridge, where Chesterton-lane turns off, a mass of broken, packed, and worn stone, which looks very like a portion of an old road."

—*Mr. Hussey's Papers*, p. 24.

² In repairing one of the culverts in this road two years ago, near Weston, the workmen came upon the original Roman brickwork. More of this might no doubt be found. For a description of this road, see Plot's "Natural History of Oxon," chap. x. § 33, and Kennett's *Par. Ants.* chap. v.

³ In a perambulation of Bernwood, dated 1294, it is so called, "*Akeman-strete*" (Kennett's *P. A.*); also in another, dated 1315, (*Chartul. de Boarstall MS. f. 113.*)

⁴ "*Acha* in Irish is a dyke, mound, or bank."—*Stukeley's Itin.*

to the adjoining hill, whence a panoramic view of the surrounding country was easily obtained. This spot is now to be found in some ploughed land in two adjoining grass-fields on the left-hand side of the road leading from Bicester to Oxford, just where this road makes a turn at right angles to Wendlebury, at about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles distance from Bicester, and where the eleventh mile-stone from Oxford stands. The soil is still distinguished as dry and receptive of much rain, the crops on it always shewing signs of drought before those on the surrounding land.

This station, having been formed for the especial protection of the roads, was placed in close connection with them, occupying some ground on either side of them, and including a part of them within its compass. The *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road passed straight through its centre.

"The track of the way that passes the city in the middle from south to north is still very high raised."
—*Stukeley's Itin.*

The Akeman Street entered the station on its east side, and then joined the central road, subdividing its eastern half into two equal parts.

"From Langford there is an evident road made of large stones, up to the centre of the eastern boundary of the station."—*Mr. Hussey's Paper.*

The ground enclosed contained the usual area of 350 yards, and was defended by a ditch and bank.

"The vallum and ditch are sufficiently visible, though both have met with equal change; the vallum from the plough, which levels it to a certain quantity every year, and the inundation of the meadow (?) raises the ditch; these are mostly discernible at the corners, for there they are still pretty perfect, and so notoriously that the country people tell you in those places were four towers to defend the city."—*Stukeley's Itin.*

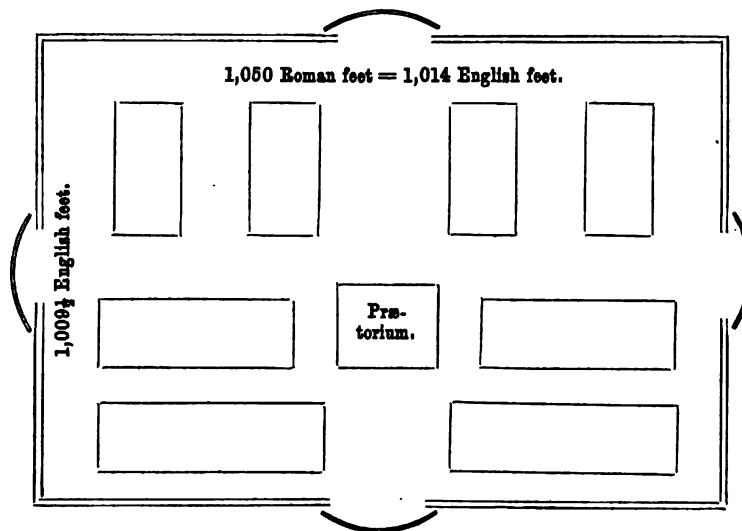
This enclosure was capable of holding a considerable number of soldiers, probably a legion (without its auxiliaries, amounting to 4,500 men), who lived in dwellings built of stone and brick, and roofed with tiles.

On the west side of the encampment was the *Prætorium*, the residence of the *Prætor*, or General in command. This house was a high tower, standing in the centre of an area of about 100 feet square, and furnished with an hypocaust at its basement. As it stood outside the defence of the camp, it had for its protection a fosse surrounding it, and a kind of battering-ram called *Rulla*^k.

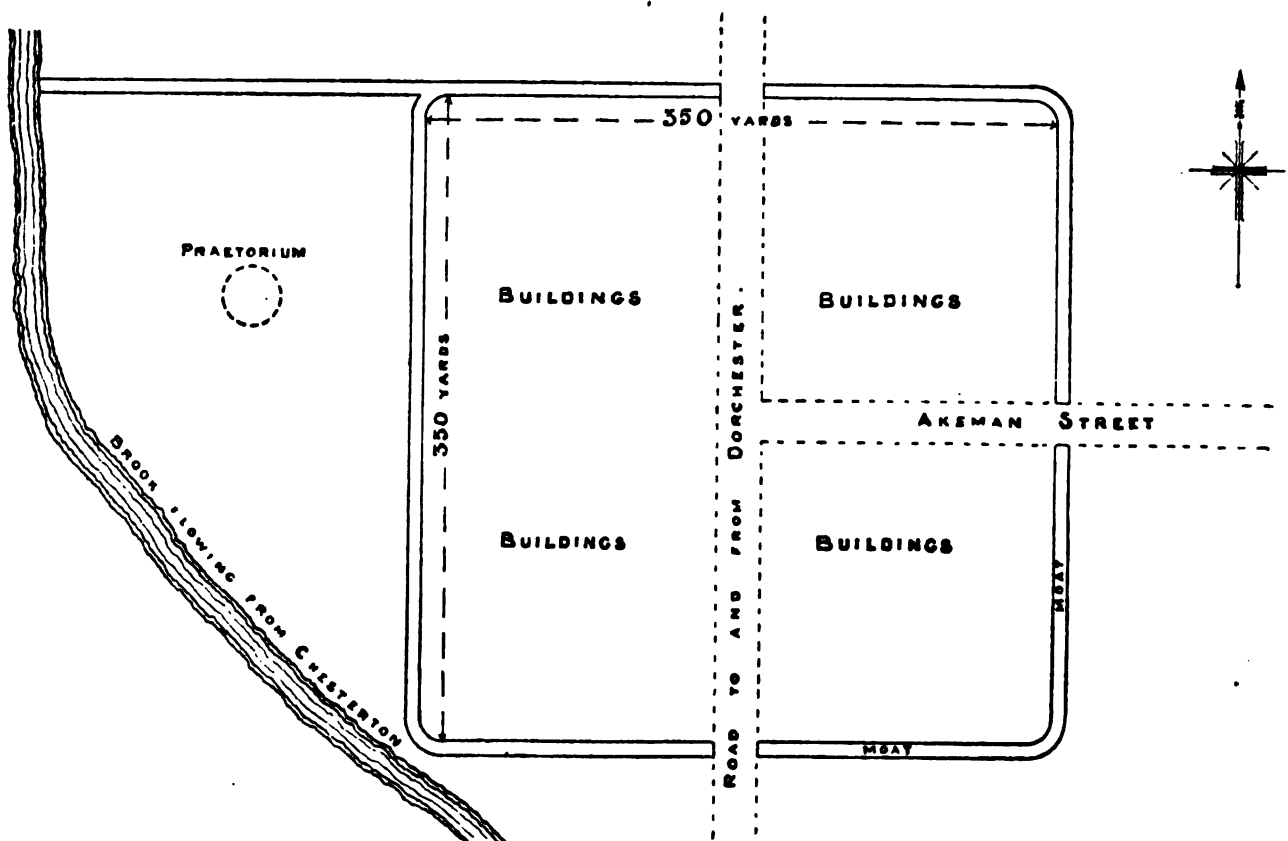
The date of the formation of this station must always remain an uncertainty. The discovery of some coins of the early Roman Emperors on its site may suggest, but does not necessitate, an early one, and there are strong reasons for assigning it to a date not earlier than the first half of the third century. It is not mentioned in Ptolemy's Geography, A.D. 120, nor in the list of the Roman stations given in the Itinerary of Antoninus, A.D. 200, and its construction plainly points to a late period. The first Roman camps in this country were all formed on one simple and regular system, but in the later ones uncertain and variable plans of castrametation frequently prevailed. The station in this district bore evident marks of the latter, the *Prætorium* being placed in an unusual position, three gates only leading into the camp, and these unprotected; and the defence-works being of slight dimensions, the Romans, as they felt their position in this

^k "*Rulla* is a diminutive of *Runa*, which cometh of *Ruo*, 'to rush,' that as *Aries* was a kind of engine to batter walls withall, so also the engine *Rulla* was broad-headed, like a plough-staff, which thereupon is called *Rullum*, and served to beat off the enemies from the walls."—*History of Allcheester, in Kennett's P. A.*, p. 694

country to strengthen, grudging the labour of throwing up the larger entrenchments, which they thought necessary at first. The following sketch represents the camp of a single legion on the Polybian system¹.



The following plan of the camp in this district will shew how it differed from the former.



¹ See General Roy's "Military Antiquities of the Romans in Great Britain," p. 52.

The history of most of the Roman stations in this country is, that the temporary camp grew into a permanent one, the camp into the town, and the town into the city; and so there have not been wanting antiquaries and others who have magnified the station in this district. Thus some have imagined stone walls, with towers at their four corners, surrounding it; and one writer^m has contrived to see in it the walled city which Allectus, after his defeat of Carausius, strengthened for his residence, and in the Prætorium a watch-tower, which he built for its greater security. Others have tried to find a mention of this station in the various records of the Roman occupation of this country. Thus Mr. Salmon seeks to prove that this was the station *Isanavatia*, mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary; Stukeleyⁿ, Baxter, and Horsley, consider it to be *Alauna*, one of the stations mentioned by the anonymous geographer of Ravenna (A.D. 650), while the writer of the forged Itinerary of Richard of Cirencester calls it *Ælia Castra*.

These are, however, simple guesses, for which there is no foundation of fact. All that is certain is that this was a station of no great strength or importance, one of the many which the Romans formed for the protection of their soldiers, as they marched along their roads, and that nothing has been discovered in modern times to give any reason for supposing that it ever deviated from its original purpose and character through the two centuries and more of its existence.

ROMAN ENCAMPMENTS.

As soon as the Romans had established themselves within their military station, their next step was to secure this position, and to hold in subjection the surrounding country. Smaller encampments for soldiers therefore followed in other places. On the top of the ridge of hills which lie to the south of the Akeman Street, traces of such are still distinctly visible.

"We ascended Bury Hill, a village upon the highest topped mountain in the country; it is vulgarly called the Brill, as Mr. Camden takes notice; this has a vast prospect over Bernwood, Ottmore, and the whole country, bounded only by the superior Chiltern, 7 miles off. At the top of the Brill, by the church, I saw parcels of the old Roman camp, which has been modernized with additional bastions in the civil wars^o."

^m The author of the "History of Allchester," written in 1622, and printed in the Appendix of Bp. Kennett's Parochial Antiquities.

In 1857 the Rev. W. L. Brown, Rector of Wendlebury, who had taken great interest in the examination of the site of the station, read a "Paper on Alchester," which is published among the records of the Oxfordshire Archæological Society. In it he says: "As regards what has been said of towers having formerly stood at the angles of the camp, as well as of Allectus' 'bank of earth of some two or three miles in length on the south-west,' I can only say that of the latter I know of no traces whatever, but that there are certainly small mounds at the north-east and south-east angles of the camp which may conceal the remains of towers. I should not hastily conclude that this is so, for there is no reason why these higher spots may not have been occasioned by the accumulation of earth, out of the trenches which would here meet at right angles; so that, if the soil were thrown, as is probable it was, on the inner side, such mounds as are now visible would have been the result. At the western angles of the camp the rise of ground is not so perceptible.

"The several descriptions of Alchester by the authors of its history, appended to Kennett's Parochial Antiquities,

as well as by Stukeley and by Dunkin at different times, will be considered valuable if it appears that they have faithfully recorded what was then actually known to exist. It is easier, however, to construct a theory than to investigate facts, and far more agreeable to imagine 'massive walls' and extensive ruins buried beneath the surface of the ground, than to experience the repeated disappointment of opening the ground and finding nothing. This last has rather been my fortune, that is, I have found nothing at all to correspond with the idea that Alchester was either a closely-built city, or even a place of any great strength. That it was a fortified camp must be admitted, with perhaps considerable earthworks, and containing several buildings, some of which might be of respectable size and character. It seems also to have been occupied by a large population and, occasionally at least, by persons of importance, as may be gathered from the rather superior workmanship of some of the pottery found there."

ⁿ "Alchester, where was the undoubted *Alauna* of Ravens, mentioned thus in that valuable author: London, Tamese (Thame), Branavis (Banbury), *Alauna*."—*Stukeley's Itin.*

^o Stukeley's Itin. p. 43.

Remains of a similar encampment on Muswell Hill also exist, and on some rising ground at Ludgershall, close by, traces of Roman occupation have been found. It is further probable that the Romans had an outpost on the top of Blackthorn Hill, which then lay on the line of the Akeman Street, and where the remains of human bodies have been found. This latter might have served as a means of communication by signal between the encampments on the hills and the military station.

In the south part of this district, also, Roman soldiers were stationed. A small station was certainly formed at Islip, where traces of it may still be seen in a field near the Manor-house. Roman coins and pottery were formerly found in the fields near Wood Hill on the other side of the village^p, and remains of the latter are common still. Roman remains have also been dug up at Woodperry, in the parish of Stanton St. John. Thus it appears probable that almost every chief eminence in this neighbourhood was at some time the site of a Roman entrenchment.

BRANCH ROADS.

More direct communication between these various stations soon became necessary. Soldiers going to and from the encampments on the Brill and Muswell hills, found it an out-of-the-way march to travel by the *Akeman Street*, and the *Portway*, as they passed through this district. A shorter way therefore was, after some time, constructed. Traces of a Roman road still exist, leading southwards from the *Akeman Street*, between the present villages of Ambrosden and Merton, in the line of the bridleway now leading to Boarstall^q. This road was continued in a north-west direction on the other side of the *Akeman Street*.

"Another of these streets turned from *Akeman Street* on the east side of the brook, through the grounds called Langford, cutting the lane which leads to Bicester, on the south side of Candle-meadow, and thence passing thro' the lower end of Dunkin's ground, where, upon the late digging of a pond, has appear'd the plainest evidence of a paved way, so passing thro' Lanton, went on to Stratton."—*Kennet's P. A.*, chap. iii.

This road ran for some distance in the line of the road now leading from Bicester to Launton, and then turned from it, through the fields now called "The Marlins" and "Towlands," and where the ridge beyond these is still distinctly visible^r, to the road now leading to Caversfield. Turning from the latter, it ran in a straight direction between Bainton Copse and Cotmore Farm to the high ground above Bainton, where it is still clearly traceable; thence it passed east of Stoke towards Tusmore, and thence along the road now leading in a straight line to Souldern, where it joined the *Portway*.

SKIMMING DISH.

This road, therefore, crossed the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road. Before, and at the point of junction, the surrounding land on one side was low, and a moor. Here, therefore, it is probable that the ridge of the road was considerably raised, leaving a long dyke or ditch by the side of it.

^p Dr. Plot mentions and describes two coins found here in 1676. See "Historical Notices of Islip," by J. G. Halliwell, in *Archæological Journal*, vol. v.

^q See Mr. Hussey's Paper.

^r This ridge is very marked for some distance in the fields lying on the right-hand side of the road leading from

Launton to Caversfield, and is evidently a continuation of the road branching off from the Buckingham-road to Caversfield. It was used as a road until the enclosure of Launton parish in 1815, when a new road was formed where it now runs. In old documents this ridge is called "Launton Bank."

This is probably the origin of the strange name now attached to this spot, "Skimming Dish." It is possible that this name may be only modern, though there is no known reason to suppose it to be so, and there is nothing in the present appearance of the spot to suggest its connection with a dairy-farm; but if it is, as appears most likely, the corruption of an old name, it may have been originally *Akemannes-dlc*, or dyke^s. This, it is conceivable, might become, by the dropping of the first letter (A), *kemannes-dlc*, and then by a further corruption, and the prefixing of S in pronunciation, *Skemann-dlc* = 'Skimming-dish,' a change no greater than many others.

ROMAN BATTLE.

Local tradition has always asserted that in the struggles for the government of Britain at the end of the third century between Marcus Aurelius Valerius Carausius, and Allectus, this district was the scene of one or more battles. Now it is true that a local tradition current in modern times may often be nothing more than the guess of some antiquary in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, generally based upon a blunder, or upon some fact, which serves to magnify the importance of the place to which it refers, and that, if the tradition stands alone without any corroborating evidence, we may reasonably question it. But the tradition named in this instance is not of such kind, for some recent discoveries have afforded a remarkable confirmation of its truth.

As soon as Carausius had crossed from Gaul to this country, with the Roman fleet under his command, his policy was to win over to his side the Roman soldiers stationed within it by a generous distribution of the wealth which he had acquired. With the fleet and army thus gained to his favour, like Napoleon Buonaparte in the present century, he soon established his authority, and then assumed the title of Augustus, Emperor of Britain^t. He came, he said, as one of their own race, to liberate the Britains from the Roman yoke. The lower classes readily favoured his designs, and these he gathered in large numbers to his side, but the British "reguli," or petty princes, while welcoming their supposed emancipation, were prejudiced against their liberator, because he was a foreigner, an Irish, not a British, Celt, and with these therefore he had no sympathy. Allectus was the friend of Carausius and the commander-in-chief of his army; but noticing the discontent and disaffection of the chief Britons, he soon put himself at the head of the malcontents, and rallied them under his standard against Carausius. A state of war then arose between the two parties, and it was during this time that the battle is said to have been fought in this district.

The two contending forces would necessarily march along the existing roads, and in close proximity to these there were, until lately, evident marks of Roman entrenchments. A fosse and vallum, with marks of other fortifications, were clearly traceable in the beginning of the present century, by the side of the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road, on the north side of the present town of Bicester^u; and that these marked the site of a large Roman encampment is clear, from the name which the English settlers three centuries later gave to this spot.

^t This road ran from the *Akeman Street*, and so may well have received its name.

^u See notes on Carausius, British Sovereign and Emperor, A.D. 287—294, in "Notes and Queries," No. 176—179, 193. See also Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography." See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," vol. II. chap. xiii. pp. 120—122. (London, 1848.)

^v In the field now attached to Mr. Coker's property at Bicester House, near the brook which runs from Crockwell, and bounds it, Mr. Dunkin, in 1816, has noticed them as then visible (see his "History of Bicester," p. 135, note), but supposes them to have been the remains of the old town of Bicester.

At a distance of about five miles north of this spot, there were plain marks of another encampment.

"The very entrenched scone of Caraus's camp, where it lay, still appears in the plain upon Bayard-green, some mile or better distant from the now church of Caversfield."—*MS. History of Allcheſter*, written 1622.

These were doubtless the two camps of the contending armies; and here imagination may be lawfully invoked to supply some probable details of the engagement, which was fought on the ground between them. Allectus, having had the chief command of the Roman soldiers, would, in all likelihood, make for the military station which he knew existed in this district, and in the spot nearest to it, where he could find a sufficient water-supply, would establish his head-quarters. We may suppose him, therefore, to have entrenched his followers in the spot of ground first mentioned, just outside the present town of Bicester; Carausius, advancing from an opposite direction, soon became acquainted with the position which his adversary had taken up. Unwilling to meet him in the narrow road, he turned aside from it, and proceeded northwards, until he found a broad plateau of elevated ground, which offered an eligible spot for the encampment of his troops. Here, therefore, we may suppose him to have taken up his position, facing from a considerable distance Allectus and his camp.

From these two hostile positions, we may further picture the contending armies to have marched on some day in, or about, the year 293 A.D.

A battle then took place on the banks of a little stream which flowed by the place of their meeting. With Carausius marched a mixed multitude of Frank and Roman soldiers, followed by an undisciplined crowd of Britons of the poorer classes; while under the standard of Allectus were gathered many British chieftains, men of large stature and fierce of mien, in their war chariots, with as many of their descendants as their tyranny could compel to follow them. The battle ended as, under such circumstances, might be anticipated. Allectus remained master of the field, Carausius being killed either in the fight, or immediately after it, by treachery^{*}.

The site of this battle is definitely fixed by the spot where the dead were buried.

CAVERSFIELD.

The churchyard of Caversfield is unlike any other, being a square, which has been enclosed by a raised bank of earth with a ditch on its outside. Recent alterations have levelled the bank, and filled-up the ditch in most places, but both were very marked within living memory, and some traces of them still remain. Within and without this enclosure the remains of many human bodies have been found; these had been buried, without any order, in graves shaped by loose limestones laid edgeways to form their sides, with larger ones placed across to form a covering, at some time long anterior to the erection of a church on this spot. These discoveries have been

^{*} The learned writer of the articles on Carausius in "Notes and Queries," who has given great pains to the study of the history of this eminent man, W. B. MacCabe, Dublin, says in a note to the compiler of this history:—

"I have very carefully gone over all that has been said of Carausius in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Tysilio, Laynmon, Hardyng, &c., &c., and the result is, my conviction that there was a battle between Carausius and Allectus; that in that battle Carausius was treacherously slain by Allectus. In fact my conviction is, that Geoffrey of Monmouth and

all his followers, in their jumbling up of persons and circumstances, in describing Bursianus Caracalla as being treacherously slain by Carausius (Bursianus having been 60 years in his grave before Carausius came to Britain), and in describing the death and circumstances preliminary to the death of Bursianus, they are actually describing what happened to Carausius, the victim of treachery, of desertion by his allies, and, when so deserted, slain on the field of battle."

chiefly made within the last few years. Thus, in 1866, upon digging a deep drain across the road at the north-west corner of the churchyard, just outside the old mound, five human bodies were found buried in graves such as have been described. Soon afterwards, upon digging a pit for an ice-house at the opposite corner, and outside the churchyard, several human bones were found dispersed in the earth. Again, at the restoration of the church in 1874, three bodies in separate graves were found more than a foot below the north-east angle of the chancel-wall; and at the same time three more placed side by side, the heads of the two outside resting upon the shoulders of the central one, in one grave, were found under the pavement of the church in the spot where the earth was dug out to form a chamber for the present heating apparatus. More than common attention had been bestowed upon the last-named grave, the head-stone having been carefully hewn into a trefoil shape ♣. Of the remains within it, the skull of the central body was found quite perfect, retaining the teeth, and the bones were those of a man of large stature, the hip-bone measuring 2 feet 4 inches, but the two bodies on the side of it were those of younger persons, probably the sons, or perhaps the wives, of the central figure, if the latter had been female warriors⁷. The same friendly hands which dug these graves, probably laboured afterwards to cast up a mound of earth around them, and the fact that a mound was raised proves that this was the burial-place of some person of distinction. The care bestowed upon the grave last mentioned, and its position in the centre of the enclosure, make it not unlikely that here rested the great man, perhaps Carausius himself, in whose honour the mound was raised. This burial-place was long regarded as a sacred spot, which, retaining its original character three centuries later, was named by the English *Cafer*, an 'enclosure'. The land around it, when brought into cultivation, was therefore called *Cafer-feld*, now Caversfield.

OTHER BATTLES.

Several battles followed between the partisans of Carausius, seeking to avenge their leader's death, and the Britons under Allectus, whose recent victory the latter had acknowledged by proclaiming him Emperor. It was usual for the Roman Emperors and their military commanders to commemorate their victories in Britain by the issue of coins. From the number of coins

⁷ These, and the other remains found in 1874, were carefully preserved, and reburied in the north-east corner of the churchyard; a stone marks the spot, and bears the following appropriate inscription:—

"Sacred
To many whose names,
Though lost to men,
Are known to God."

⁸ The Anglo-Saxon word *Cafer* has been explained from a root signifying 'to hide, conceal, protect.' From this same root the kindred words, 'coffer, coffin,' and such like are derived.

This word is found in the Saxon *Cafer-tun*, which means 'a small enclosure,' sometimes a mere court, sometimes a small yard, or paddock, but it is elsewhere unknown.

Camden, in his *Britannia* (Additions to Bucks), says: "In this Hundred is Caversfield; whether so called from Carausius, as if one should say 'Carausius's field,' I dare

not be positive. However, 'tis very probable, from the circumstance, that this is the very place where Allectus slew Carausius in battle."

Kennett, supposing the original name to have been *Carausfeld*, derives it in the same way; and no doubt the name of Caros or Carausius is found in some places, as e.g. the river Caron in Scotland, and the Cardike in Cambridgeshire.

But this derivation of the name can hardly be maintained, because the original name is unmistakably *Cafer* or *Kaure-feld*, and not *Carosfeld*. Besides, the word *feld* is Anglo-Saxon, and not Celtic, and must therefore have been given by the English occupiers of this district, and they were not likely to have named a place after a man of whom they only heard by local tradition.

Browne Willis, in his "History of Caversfield," gives Bishop Kennett's derivation of the name, but adds, "though it may rather be derived from *Cafer*, an 'inclosure.'"

bearing the name of Allectus which have been found in this neighbourhood^a, it may be fairly conjectured that during the three years in which he enjoyed his Imperial honours, he resided much in this midland district, occasionally making the station his head-quarters^b. That a second battle was fought, probably within this district, near the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road, is almost certain from the discovery of another burial-place, which was plainly that of soldiers killed in battle. When the garden adjoining the present Rectory-house at Oddington was being laid out in 1815, several detached bones and entire skeletons were found, only slightly covered with earth, at a depth of no more than from one to two feet beneath the surface, and scattered within a small area in no uniform position. Of the six or seven skeletons laid bare^c, all were the remains of tall and large men, one measuring more than six feet from head to foot. On the heads of some of them helmets were found, and by their sides the mouldering remains of some weapons. A spear-head was found fixed between the lower rib and hip of one skeleton, and the same under the shoulder of another. Some of these weapons were sent to be examined by competent authority, and were judged to be Roman, and the fragments of some have been preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. From the manner of their burial it seems plain that these bodies belonged to a party of soldiers, who, if not defeated and flying, yet thought it not prudent to stay in the neighbourhood of the enemy, to whose courage they had fallen victims. Whether the enemy here was the native Briton or some opposing party of Romans, as that of Allectus or Carausius, must remain a matter of conjecture^d.

ROMAN DWELLINGS.

Roman garrisons were not like the soldiers of our own army, stationed in different places, and engaged for a certain period of service, but they resembled rather the colonists settled upon the military frontiers of Austria. They were fixtures in the same stations for generations. Hence there grew up in course of time around the station in this district, as elsewhere, a kind of quasi-military population, partly Roman and partly British, speaking the Latin language, and in other respects distinguished from the native inhabitants around them. The humbler classes of this Romanized population fixed their dwellings near the station on its north and west sides, where some foundations and other remains of buildings have been dug up, while others built larger houses at a distance from it, but all in more or less proximity to the roads of the district.

COLD HARBOUR FARMS.

The sites of two Roman houses are known by the name which they bear at the present day. After the Romans left Britain, the ruins of their houses and small stations were often repaired

^a Coins, some bearing the name of Carausius, and others of Allectus, were found at Steeple Claydon in 1616. See Kennett's *P. A.*, chap. iv.

In the *Monumenta Historica Britannica* (London, 1848), there are no less than ten folio sheets filled with engravings of more than 300 coins and medals of Carausius. Copies of his coins may be seen in Camden's *Britannia*; Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography." There are two other works, one by Genebrier in French (Paris, 1749), translated lately into German, and another by Dr. Stukeley, (London, 1759), entitled a "Medallic History of Carausius."

Kennett says of Allectus, "His coins or medals, which in other parts are very rare, have been so often found in

this part of the country, that it is an argument he had here his frequent marches, if not his fixed stations."—*Kennett, P. A.*, chap. iii.

^b From the supposed connection of Allectus with this station, the author of the "History of Allchester," given in Kennett's *Par. Ant.*, has fancifully derived that name, *Allecti-castrum*, abbreviated to *All-cair*, or *cestre*.

^c One was found where the hedge of the garden to the south-west now stands. It is probable that more remains might be found in the field outside the garden in that quarter.

^d This is mentioned in Mr. Hussey's Paper on "The Roman road from Dorchester to Alchester," pp. 35, 36.

or altered, to form a lodging for travellers, who, carrying their provisions with them, could often find within them a temporary resting-place. A shelter of this kind, being often nothing more than a covering of bare walls, was called by the early Anglo-Saxon settlers, who chiefly used such, *Cealdhereburga*, 'Cold Harbour.' This name is found in two farm-houses of this district, one situated between Shelswell and Mixbury, and the other between Chesterton and Middleton, and is so marked on the Ordnance Map.

CAULCOT.

A third Roman house of some importance stood on the east side of the *Portway*, and has left its certain mark in the hamlet of "Cald-cot," or "Cold-cot," which now occupies its site.

CHILGROVE.

Further northwards, along the line of the *Portway*, many Roman remains have been at different times discovered, at Upper Heyford, Chilgrove, and Souldern. Chilgrove is a bleak, high spot of ground, covered, until only a few years ago, with thick wood, and that it was in some way distinguished from the surrounding country, as known to, and occupied by, the Romans, is plain from the English giving it the same name as they gave to so many places of Roman occupation, *cile*, or *cyle* ('cool or cold'), *graf* ('a grove'). A large Roman population appears to have been resident hereabouts.

FRINGFORD LODGE.

A villa of considerable importance was built on the rising ground, to the left of the road leading to *Lactodorum*, where a dry soil, and a full spring in the adjoining brook, and a wide expanse of scenery afforded an attractive site. When the ground was disturbed here about 1860, two human skeletons were found at a depth of two feet below the surface, the skulls being quite perfect; and several remains of tessellated pavement were laid bare, some tesserae being large and coarse, and others smaller and of different colours, red, blue, and white, the latter probably forming the floor of the hall or other chief room of the house^f. An underground chamber close by the pavement, with two or three steps leading down to it, was also discovered, which looked as if it might have been the site of the hypocaust (warming apparatus) or a bath^g; and broken pottery abounds. There are also evident signs of an embankment at a short distance in front of this house, over which the present road now runs^h, and in the adjoining field small coins, mostly copper, have been constantly turned up in such numbers as if the ground had been sown broad-

* In pure Anglo-Saxon *c* is never followed by *h*, but it was so in even early post-Saxon times, and it is now very general in words of Anglo-Saxon origin. Thus *cild* is Anglo-Saxon for 'child,' *Ciltern* for 'Chiltern,' &c. 'Chalgrove' means the same as *Chilgrove*, only it is derived from the adjective *ceald*, or *cald* (Lat. *gelidus*), and not from the noun *cile*, or *cyle*.

The spot called *Chilgrove* is in the parish of Upper Heyford, between that village and Ardley. It is now a ploughed field lying on the left-hand side of the road leading from Middleton to Somerton. It was within living memory covered with fine old oak and other trees, whose massive roots and stumps excited the astonishment of the men who were employed to grub them up. The

popular derivation of the name current in Fritwell and the adjoining villages is, that it was the scene of the nursery story of the Babes in the Wood.

^f Some of these are still preserved by the Rev. E. Withington, the present owner of this property. No doubt much more of the pavement might be found under the raised banks in front of the present house, where the surface-soil was not disturbed at the time the tesserae were laid bare by taking away earth to form these banks.

^g This chamber was not disturbed, but only filled-in with earth, and the site of it is still traceable in a small hollow in front of the house.

^h The public road is here raised above the level of the surrounding ground, and falls abruptly at the two ends.

cast with them. Hence we may conclude that a dwelling-house of more than ordinary taste and size stood on this spot, and that the owners of it were wealthy.

Other smaller houses no doubt surrounded this villa at some distance; Dr. Plot¹ mentions Roman money having been found at Stratton and Fringford before his time; and about fifty years ago coins and other Roman remains were found on the Glebe Farm in Fringford; and still later coins were dug up in the neighbouring hill, on the estate of G. Glen, Esq.², by men cutting drains. Coins have also been found scattered about within the parish of Launton, close to the branch road leading northwards³. These discoveries, together with those of human remains close by, imply that there must have been a considerable Roman population resident in this part of the district also.

ROMAN BATH AT MIDDLETON.

Remains of Roman brickwork were found some years ago at Middleton, on a spot of ground opposite the village inn, which seemed to be parts of a bath^m. These imply the existence of a house of some importance adjoining.

As of the residences mentioned so little now remains to tell of their former existence, we may fairly conjecture that there were others, scattered about in more or less proximity to these, of which the spade and the plough of modern times have destroyed every vestigeⁿ.

These dwellings flourished in the later days of the Roman dominion, and were homes of peace, order, and refinement. No gates, or walls, or banks, or ditches, were needed to defend them, but their inmates lived securely in the midst of the old British inhabitants of the country, who served as slaves upon their premises. The Prætor, and other officers of the garrison, or of soldiers on their march, and occasional travellers along the roads of the district, formed a pleasant society; and these were entertained with the proverbial hospitality which Roman gentlemen always exercised towards their guests. Sculpture, paintings, and various works of art probably adorned the chief houses, while in their gardens might be seen the flowers, fruit-trees, and vegetables, which the Romans had brought with them into Britain.

In unfavourable contrast with these pleasant places stood the wretched cabins in which the British serfs passed their existence, who were daily employed in cultivating the land around their lord's dwelling, helping to make Britain at that time one of the great corn-exporting countries of the world.

ROMAN POTTERIES.

The bricks of which these houses were built, and the various vessels of domestic use within them, came from this neighbourhood. In the south, and clay part of this district, the Romans established several potteries, to which there was easy access by the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road. One has very recently been discovered just outside this district, between Sandford and Littlemore, about a quarter of a mile to the west of the Roman road, when the men employed in the drainage works of Oxford near the Sewage Farm dug up many Roman vessels

¹ Nat. Hist. of Oxon, chap. x. § 73.

² They are now in his possession.

³ They were found close to the hedge which now divides the "Towlands" and "Marlins" fields, not far from the pond in the latter, but were sold at the time, and are now lost sight of.

^m See Dunkin's "History of Middleton."

ⁿ Along the line of the Dorchester and Towcester road, beyond the bounds of this district, many Roman remains have been found: 1. of a villa near Wheatley, about ten furlongs from this road; 2. a vase at Holton; 3. and others of many kinds at Woodperry. See Journal of Archaeological Society, vol. iii.

quite perfect, and many thousand fragments of pottery, which are now preserved in the Museum at Oxford. Two other potteries were nearer. One was discovered in 1817, when, upon the digging of a large ditch on Ottmoor, many Roman relics were found. Among these was a brass fibula, in excellent preservation, and two coins probably of Constantine II. (the inscription was illegible, but the features of the royal head were visible, and on the reverse was a portico with a statue on the pediment), and a quantity of broken materials of all kinds*. Nothing especially noteworthy was observed among the fragments of pottery, except that on one there was inscribed JURE—URO, which implies that the Romans took the control of the trade into their own hands, and granted patents or licences for exercising it.

The spot where this pottery was situated may now be seen in the meadows between the old Roman road and Fencot, about a quarter of a mile from the former, and three fields distant on the south from the lane running from Charlton to Fencot. This ground has evidently been excavated, and is now called "Fencot and Moorcot Fleets†."

There seems to have been a second pottery close by, on a spot called "Brismere," in the parish of Oddington, extending from the Rectory-house there to Charlton, which is said to be still covered with the débris of Roman pottery.

ROMAN BARROWS.

By the side of their roads the Romans constructed the residences of the living and the cemeteries of the dead. The object of all peoples in erecting a mound over the dead was to make the spot known. Their aim was twofold: to place it in a position where it could be seen as far as possible, and where also the spirit of the departed, which was supposed to haunt the grave, could see many people and much territory. Those nations, therefore, who had no towns, and consequently no roads of importance, like the Britons, and all the German and Northern people, usually chose for their burial-places the tops of mountains or hills, where such existed; or at all events the highest and widest elevations in the neighbourhood; while the Romans, who lived in towns, chose their burial-places by the sides of the public roads, where travellers were continually passing‡. Thus we find four barrows, or grave-mounds, by the side of the roads in this district, which doubtless covered the ashes of distinguished men.

PLOUGHLEY HILL.

It will be observed that in the north-west corner of this district two roads met at one point, close to the site of the present village of Souldern. This spot thus became a chief place of concourse, and here, therefore, the Romans cast up one of their chief barrows‡.

* See "Gentleman's Magazine," October, 1817, p. 311.

† See Mr. Hussey's Paper on "The Roman Road from Allchester to Dorchester," p. 34. He adds, "There is one remarkable circumstance relating to this pottery. A few years before it was discovered, a brickmaker was brought from a distance on speculation into Ottmoor, to try the clay there for making bricks, and if he found it good enough, it was intended that he should establish a business there. After making many trials in other parts of the moor, he at last ascertained that the best clay of all was just on *this very spot*, and accordingly he made preparation for fixing his abode there, and carrying on his work. Some circumstances made this inconvenient,

and he was in consequence obliged to move, and settle himself a little way to the westward, very near the Roman road; but being dissatisfied with this, he gave up the scheme and went away. Soon afterwards it was found, on the discovery of the pottery, that the Romans had been before him in choosing that ground; they also, as we may suppose, had proved that this spot yielded the best clay in the country."

‡ "History of Uriconium," by T. Wright.

§ See Plot's Nat. Hist. of Oxon, chap. x. § 48. The spot was close to the point where the road to Souldern turns off from the Banbury-road, to the right of the road leading from the same point to Fritwell.

"At Souldern," says Dr. Stukeley, "is a curious barrow, neatly turned like a bell, small and high; I believe it Celtic."

Dr. Stukeley was led to this opinion because the barrows of the Celtic period of our history generally rise from the level of the ground towards the centre, more acutely than do those of the Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon periods; and if the Roman *Portway* occupied the line of a British trackway, as has been conjectured, this mound may have been the burial-place of some British chief before it was used by the Romans. This mound was in a later age used by the English. It was not unusual for the Anglo-Saxons to take possession of the burial-grounds which they found in this country, and to utilize them, just as their Roman predecessors had done with those of the Britons; and that they thus treated this tumulus is certain, from the name which they gave to it.

This barrow was levelled in 1845, when, under the surface, the bones of three men, one of them clearly of large stature, were found^a. Hence we may conclude that it told of three distinct periods of local history, and that the British, Roman, and English inhabitants of this district used it consecutively, in an interval of many centuries, for the burial-place of some one of their race whom they delighted to honour^t.

ROUND HILL.

Another barrow, circular in shape, was formed in the north part of this district, by the side of the branch road leading to the *Portway*. This has been long known as "Round-hill," and stands just outside Tusmore Park, near the farm-house which takes its name from it.

OTHER TUMULI.

Two more tumuli were raised on the two sides of the *Akeman Street*, facing each other: one close to the street, on the right-hand side of the road now leading from Middleton to Weston; and the other on the highest ground northwards of the street, immediately opposite to the "Oxford Lodge," at the entrance to Middleton Park^u.

These two barrows are now scarcely noticeable from the large trees which overshadow them.

The four barrows of this district much resembled each other. With the exception of the first they still remain unopened, and the discovery of their contents is yet needed to clear up their exact history.

OTHER BURIAL PLACES.

Other spots were chosen for burial, and in these the three different modes of ancient sepulture have been found: 1. the most ancient, that in which the dead have been deposited entire, with the legs gathered up; 2. that nearly contemporaneous with the first, in which cremation has been used; and 3. the latest, in which the dead have been extended at full length: all these probably belonging to the Romano-British period, and not to an earlier one.

1. During the formation of the turnpike-road to Buckingham, in 1813, just opposite to the road which turns from it to Caversfield, on the south side, where the ground has been excavated,

^a These bones were subsequently buried in a garden close by.

^t "In the East it is a common thing for the same shrine to serve the purpose of many succeeding religions. A spot once sanctified by worship is thus very likely to become venerated on quite a new set of considerations, and in some

cases even the tombs of the saints of one religion become the tombs of the saints of another."—*The Land of Gilead*, by L. Oliphant, 1880.

^u Kennett mentions "this barrow or large hillock cast up, that seems one of the Roman tumuli or sepulchres."—*Par. Ant.*, chap. iii.

several skeletons were found². This spot was close to the branch road leading northwards from the *Akeman Street*, and not far from the villa which stood on the present site of Fringford Lodge.

2. Describing the course of the *Portway* in the parish of Aynhoe, Mr. Baker says, in his "History of Northamptonshire,"—

"Crossing the turnpike to Buckingham, its course is continued southward, till it quits the country at Souldern, but it has been partially levelled, and reduced to the narrow pathway, walled in, which intersects Mr. Cartwright's park. In levelling the ground for this alteration, the workmen disinterred a skeleton with the legs gathered up, and enclosed between four stone slabs placed at right angles, which is considered the most ancient mode of interment. Similar discoveries have recently been made in the same direction by the side of the road to Bicester."

In January, 1844, as some workmen were digging stone in a garden near the main street at Souldern, they came upon a skeleton, and an urn which contained calcined bones, and some months afterwards, near the same spot, two more urns containing fragments of bones were discovered. Similar discoveries had been made in the same spot in 1840, but no account of them has been preserved.

3: At another spot by the side of the same road, in the parish of Upper Heyford, human bones have been often exhumed. A cinerary urn, containing calcined bones and ashes, was found here a few years ago, but it was hastily broken up by the workman who found it, in his eagerness to secure the coin it did not contain³.

4. In 1775 six human skeletons, lying in a row, were found on Blackthorn Hill, opposite the stone-pits. In 1819 another skeleton was found, doubled up, in a field called "Freeman's Hill," and at a little distance from this an earthen pot filled with black mould, and an ivory whistle about a foot long⁴. This spot lay on the side of the *Akeman Street*.

WENDLEBURY.

Just before the retirement of the Romans from Britain, the Roman army in this country amounted to about 20,000 men. Of these some 5,000 were stationed along the south-east coast, called then the Saxon frontier (*Limes Saxonicus*), as a defence against the incursions of the Saxons, and three garrisons lay north of the Thames⁵. The soldiers, therefore, posted in the station within this district were at this time fewer than they had been formerly, but they were now strengthened by a settlement near them of some of the northern auxiliaries, whom the Romans had brought into this country. Some Vandals⁶ settled themselves behind the rising ground to the west of the station, on the banks of a tributary of the Ray river, and the present road marks the way by which they went to and from the station⁷. This settlement of the Northmen was the first approach to a village in this district, and was named many years later *Vandalburg*⁸, or (by the common interchange of V and W) *Wandalburg*, (now Wendlebury).

A map of this district during the Roman occupation (341 years)⁹ is given opposite.

² See "Jackson's Oxford Journal" of that date. It is probable that more remains might be found in the field adjoining.

³ "Paper on History of Upper Heyford," by Mr. Wing of Steeple Aston.

⁴ Dunkin's "History of Blackthorn," in vol. i. p. 60 of his "History of the Hundreds of Bullingdon and Ploughley."

⁵ We learn this from the *Notitia*, written, according to Gibbon, between the years 395 and 407.

⁶ Anglo-Saxon *vandalen*, 'to wander.'

⁷ This way led from the north gate of the station out-

side the entrenchments surrounding the Prætorium, and along the level ground, avoiding the hill.

⁸ "This conjecture appears the better grounded when we consider that Zosimus reports the Vandals were sent as stipendiary soldiers into Britain by Probus the Emperor, whose coins have been found here."—*Kennell's Par. Ant.*, Chap. iv.

⁹ The Romans bore absolute sway over the south provinces of Britain for 341 years, without ever having been disturbed by any revolt, or so much as one attempt on the part of the natives to throw off the yoke.

REMAINS OF STATION.

In A.D. 411 Rome recalled her legions from Britain. During the more than fourteen centuries which have passed since that time, various relics of the station and its inhabitants have been from time to time discovered.

1. Coins of various ages, almost all of copper and in great numbers^f, those of the following Emperors being the most common :—

Vespasian, 2 of copper found in 1840 ^g .	Faustina.	Carausius.
Domitian, 1 of brass, bearing the inscription, <i>Domitian Aug. Germa</i> ^h , found about 1622.	Caracalla.	Allectus.
Antoninus.	Tetricus ⁱ .	Constantine ^l
	Probus ^k .	

2. Earthenware vessels :—

Two small vases (broken), and various other fragments of earthenware, with different stamps on them, as BIRR—DAGODUNUS, CUCCII, and one other illegible, these being probably the names of the makers, were found in 1840^m.

3. Human remains :—

A man in gilt armour, with 2 vials near his head, buried in a stone grave, found about 1622ⁿ.

A square stone with a round cavity 9 inches deep and 1 foot in diameter, containing a green glass urn full of ashes^o.

During the making of the railway in 1848-9, many more remains were found in crossing the line of the *Akeman Street*, and elsewhere near the camp. The side-cuttings skirting the station on its east side, and thence running southwards for a mile and half, shewed the previous disturbances of the soil. Human bones and fragments of pottery and rubble were there turned out; and at one spot as many as sixteen human skeletons were discovered, all of them laid side by side, their heads to the west, and arms crossed.

4. Fragments of buildings, &c :—

"As I traversed the spot (says Dr. Stukeley), at every step I saw pieces of pots and vessels of all sorts of coloured earth, red, green, and some perfectly of blue clay, that came from Aynhoe; I picked up several

^f Dr. Kennett, writing in 1695, says (Par. Ant., chap. iv.), "This area or site of Allchester has been for many ages an arable part of the common field of Wendlebury, so as the teeth of time and of the plough may be thought to have consum'd all the Roman reliques; yet by walking over the ground, I find it easie to collect many fragments of brick, tile, urns, vessels, and other materials, all of Roman make, and enough to distinguish this from any adjacent soil. Great variety and plenty of Roman money, of such especially as is dated from the decline of that Empire, has been within few years gathered and dispers'd. The largest collection is said to have been in the hands of Mr. Lee, the proprietor of Bignel-farm, in the parish of Burcester. The late Rector of Wendlebury, Mr. Bond, was by his parishioners furnish't with a considerable number of them. And within a few years, wherein I have apply'd myself to some enquiry, I have bought up more than 100 several pieces, most of which have been found by the children of Wendlebury in following the plough, or by turning the clods of earth. They call them 'Allcester coin,' and are proud of receiving more passable money for them."

^g See Paper by Rev. W. L. Brown.

^h History of Allchester, in Appendix to Kennett's P. A.

ⁱ "Infinite numbers of coins have been found and dispersed over the adjacent villages without any regard, and

after a shower of rain now, they say, sometimes they find them; I got two or three of Tetricus, junr.," &c.—*Stukeley's Itin.*

^k Kennet's Par. Ant., chap. iv.

^l "One George Maund of Chesterton, took me a piece of money there found, bearing the picture and name of Constantine, who was second from Allectus; on the right side thereof was this inscription, CONSTANTINUS AUGUSTUS, and on the other side the portraiture of a castle, having the sun and stars in chief above it, and some word on the coin by the side of the castle; to my judgment it was GALL—ITAS."—*History of Allchester.*

A number of the coins of these Emperors are now in the possession of Mr. G. Dew, of Lower Heyford, who has collected them chiefly from inhabitants of Wendlebury.

^m See Paper by Rev. W. Brown.

ⁿ Kennett's Appendix of "Hist. of Allchester."

^o Stukeley's Itin. "Dr. Plot saw this urn at a house in the town where 'tis used for a pig-trough, but the glass had been broken long before." Dr. Stukeley reports "it had remained so ever since Dr. Plot's time." Mr. Dunkin says, "It was afterwards placed in the garden-wall of the rectory; but having been removed some years ago, is now lost, though some of the present inhabitants perfectly remember it."

parcels, thinking to have carried them away, till I perceived them strewn very thick over the whole field, together with lots of bricks of all sorts; the husbandmen told me they frequently break their ploughs against foundations of hewn stone and brick, and we saw upon the spot many paving-stones with a smooth face, and laid in a very good bed of gravel, till they draw them all up by degrees, when the plough chances to go a little deeper than ordinary.

"On the west side of the city, a little distance from the ditch, is an artificial hill in the very middle of the meadow, which they call 'The Castle Hill,' and is full of Roman bricks, stones, and foundations. I attentively considered this place; the circuit of it is very plain and definable.

"Under the direction of Mr. Penrose, the proprietor of the meadow, the workmen began opening of the Mount on Castle Hill in 1776, in the south-eastern part, and after digging through one foot and a-half of old bricks and tiles, and through four feet of ashes mingled with human bones, came to a paved ground covered with fine gravel. Pursuing this for seven or eight yards, they reached the walls of the *Prætorium*; these were standing about three feet in height. Going along the outside wall, about 20 or 30 feet towards the north-western angle, they came to an opening in it which appeared to be a doorway, and was about eight feet in breadth; at this opening they began to enter the building, and immediately discovered a Roman pavement raised about four feet from the level of the meadow, and appearing to extend through the whole compass of the building. This pavement consisted of *tessellæ* about one inch and a-half square, bearing different colours, neatly cemented together, and laid upon a bed of mortar and concrete. On one side of the discovered pavement was found a Roman hypocaust; it was a low room of one foot and a-half in height, floored with small pieces of cemented brick, and supported with a great number of little pillars two or three feet distant from each other, and with heaps of ashes between them. The site of the *castrum* is a very damp triangular meadow, bounded by a curving brook on the west and south. The Mount rises about eight feet in height, nearly covers half-an-acre of ground, and seems originally to have been surrounded by a slight ditch &c."

In 1852 the brook on the south-west of the station was cleaned out and deepened, when the following were found:—



1. A Corbel Head-stone.



2. A small terra-cotta Head, about the size of this Engraving.



S. A Spear-head.

Between the parallel walls discovered in 1850 within the entrenchment, a small female head cast in plaster was found¹.

APPEARANCE OF THE GROUND.

Mr. Camden in his *Britannia* (written towards the end of the sixteenth century) only remarks, "At Alchester one meets with some few remains of an old Roman Station." Dr. Stukeley, writing in 1712, has left two engravings of the appearance which the site of the old station, and the roads leading to it, presented in his days.

In 1800 the open field of Wendlebury was enclosed, when a hedge and ditch were made straight through the old entrenchment of the station, dividing it into two fields. At the same time, many hundred loads of stone were carted away from the site of the *Prætorium*².

BRITONS AND SAXONS.

Both our legendary and our real history lead to the inference that, after the retirement of the Romans, there were two great parties in this country, the Romanized, and the native, Britons³. When the ravages of the Picts and Scots and their other troubles began, the former applied to Rome for aid. Their letter was addressed "*Ætio ter consuli*," and as *Ætius* was consul for the third time in 446, it could not have been written before that year. The refusal to grant the succour they asked naturally gave the ascendancy to their political rivals, who thereupon called in the Saxons to their aid. *Vortigern* was soon made the leader of the native or British party, and his successes against the Picts and Scots soon placed him on the throne of Britain. About the same time the Romanized Britons had chosen as their leader *Aurelius Ambrosius*, the second son of the usurper *Constantine*, and under his guidance gained their first successes against the Saxons. *Vortigern* died in 464, and in that year (or 463 as some say) *Ambrosius* was made king. He rallied the Britons under his standard, and then for some forty-five years traversed the country to stimulate his subjects to their defence against their new invaders. It is probable that during one of these expeditions he came into this district, for a spot within it is clearly associated with his name.

AMBROSDEN.

Travelling by the *Akeman Street* he came to a long oval-shaped hill of the Cornbrash formation, rising to a height of about forty feet above the Oxford clay.

¹ See Paper by Rev. W. L. Brown.

² Mr. Brown says he was told by an old man then living at Chesterton, "that the whole of 'the Rulla' was dug over. The then proprietor of the field had given this man leave to make what he could of the stones, and he had sold many hundred loads of stones for the construction of the road. He could remember, he said, that the walls were some of them as much as 4 feet

thick, that there were small rooms, that there was a pavement of little square stones, and numbers of 'half bricks' (meaning, I suppose, the square Roman bricks). But he did not know of any plan or description of the place having been taken."

³ See Dr. Guest's Paper on "The Early English Settlements in South Britain," published in the "Proceedings of the Archæological Institute," Salisbury volume, 1849.

This dry spot, distinguished from all the surrounding soil, at once suggested itself as a suitable spot for an encampment, and here, at its further extremity, on ground gently sloping southwards, where some springs afforded an abundant water-supply, we may suppose him to have encamped his followers. This spot was afterwards called *Ambresdon*¹, the 'fortified hill of Ambrosius.' The bridleway still leading along the top of Blackthorn-hill straight to Ambresdon is probably the line of march which Ambrosius took when he led his troops from the Roman road to this camp.

GRAVEN-HULLE.

Then, or before, the British inhabitants of this district took up a position on the hill just above the camp, to which the Roman road gave them easy access, and which was the highest ground near. A double line of entrenchments² may still be faintly traced on the east and south sides of this hill, which led to its being afterwards named *Graven-hulle*, i.e. the 'trenched or moated hill'. Here, therefore, we may suppose, was the stronghold to which the Britons were prepared to betake themselves during the century and more in which they awaited the English invasion.

THE WATTLE-BANK, OR AVES-DITCH.

In 508 Cerdic and Cynric his son landed in Britain, and in that year Ambrosius was killed. The Saxons then established their dominion in the south, where the interests of Ambrosius and his party had been always strongest. Boundary-lines were soon drawn between the two races of Saxons and Britons, and part of these passed through this district. Traces of an embankment are visible for about six chains after crossing the present Bicester and Heyford road northwards³. There were similar traces near the farm-house which stands near Chilgrove and the turn of the road to Upper Heyford, until about five years ago, when the present occupier threw down a considerable length of bank. The same are very marked in Fritwell-lane, at the north-west corner of Ardley parish, where the bank remains good. This bank and fosse have been for many generations called the "Wattle-bank," and the "Aves-ditch". The former name doubtless arose from the peculiar construction of the bank in some parts, where, as in the neighbourhood of Fritwell, the embankment was unusually raised, and where it was therefore necessary to keep it together, and strengthen it

¹ *Ambres-burh*, the Anglo-Saxon name of Amesbury, in Wiltshire, is generally considered to signify the burgh of Ambres, and as answering to the Welsh *Caer-Emrys*, the 'city of Ambrosius.' Other places in this country are also thought to have received their name from him, as Ambresley, formerly *Ambres-ley*, in Worcestershire; Amerdene, or Amersden, also called Amberdene; and a large camp in Epping Forest called "Ambresbury Banks." See *Kennett's P. A.*, chap. vii.

² Dr. Plot, Kennett, and others, have imagined that these entrenchments were thrown up by the English or Danes, during some invasion of the latter, but there seems every reason for assigning them to an earlier date. The name *Graven* proves that the entrenchments were existing at that early date in the sixth century, when most of the places in this district received their English names.

³ *Graven* means diggings of some kind, whether quarries, pits, or trenches.

A *graff* is a ditch or moat, akin to grave, engrave, &c. (The Cavaliers are said to have entered Monmouth across "a dry graff," which on enquiry proved to be an empty

moat.) Hence a *graffen*, or 'gravenhill,' is a hill with an entrenchment. See Psalm vii. 16, "He hath graven and digged up a pit."

Bp. Kennett (*P. A.*, chap. viii.) argues that *Gravenhull* means a burial-place, the 'hill of graves.' But against this it must be remembered that our word 'grave' for interment, is a recent word in that application, the Saxon word being *byrigels*, plural *byrigelsas* = 'burying-places,' which occurs repeatedly in the Saxon charters. Besides, as a fact, no graves or human remains are ever known to have been found on this hill.

⁴ "The ruins of the bank and trench (says Dr. Kennett) are visible in several parts, and the road from Middleton to Heyford-bridge is cut through it, the bank rising on each side to a considerable height."

⁵ "This second branch of *Akeman Street*, about Fritwell they call 'Wattle-bank,' but in an old terrier of Sir Thomas Chamberleyns, it is called *Avesdich*, perhaps a corruption of *Offa's-ditch*, the great King of the Mercians."—*Plot's Nat. Hist. Oxon.*, chap. x. §§ 35, 36.

ALCHESTER.

It was probably at some time in these early wars between the Romanized and native Britons, or between the Saxons and Britons, that the Roman station in this district was destroyed. Ambrosius, thinking it altogether unsuited for a British fortress, may have pulled down its buildings when he turned the adjoining hill into a stronghold; or, if the boundary-line between the Saxon kingdom and the Britons was turned from the *Akeman Street* along the *Avesditch* instead of being extended to the station, it looks as if that part of the road, together with the station, had then fallen into the hands of the Saxons, who would, without doubt⁴, at once render the latter untenable. All that is certain is, that when the English found it in the sixth century it was then a ruin, and that it was in consequence named by them *Eald-ceaster*, altered afterwards to *Alchester*, the 'old camp.'

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST.

The Teutonic invasion sweeping over this country in successive waves, extended from first to last over a space of 200 years. Hengest and his war-band landed on the Isle of Thanet in A.D. 449. Sixty years were then completed in effecting the conquest of South Britain. About the middle of the sixth century the West Saxons of the south coast set out on a new advance of conquest. Their capture of the hill-fort of Old Sarum in A.D. 552, threw open to them the Wiltshire downs. They then pushed their way northwards along the valley of the Avon and Severn, until they reached as far as Chester and Uriconium. Here they met with a repulse. Then turned to the east by the difficulty of forcing the fastnesses of the forest of Arden, they penetrated into the valley of the Thames. A battle was fought between them and the Britons at Banbury in 556, and a march of their king Cuthwulf, in 570, made them masters of this and much of the surrounding country.

From that date this district was a second time subjugated, then becoming a part of the kingdom of the West Saxons.

ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS.

Families from the various tribes, who in quick succession landed in Britain, soon began to pour into this newly-conquered territory. Here they found an abundant waste, where they could adopt the same mode of living as they had been accustomed to in their own country. Tacitus, who gives us the earliest glimpse of the German race, said of them,—

"They live separated, and at a distance from each other, as a spring, as a plain, as a wood has attracted them. They plant villages, not after our fashion, with buildings connected and attached to each other; every one surrounds his dwelling with an open piece of ground*."

Accordingly we may suppose various parties of immigrants traversing the old Roman roads of this district, and then taking possession, either by lot or choice, of the land which lay on either side of the roads, the head man of each party marking out what he took as his own independent possession by a furrow, or line of stones, or some such rude boundary, and then,

⁴ The Saxon war was one of the fiercest contests known in the history of nations. The Saxons not only killed all they overcame in battle, but they put to death all the inhabitants of the towns and villages, and burnt, or otherwise destroyed, all buildings, so that the country was entirely

desolated wherever they extended their power.

* "Colunt discreti ac diversi, ut fons, ut campus, ut nemus placuit. Vicos locant non in nostrum morem, connexis et cohærentibus ædificiis: suam quisque domum spatio circumdat."—*Tacit. Germ.* 16.

raising upon it a dwelling-house for his family, and a yard for his cattle. This appropriated enclosure was called *tun*¹.

LOCAL NOMENCLATURE.

Each enclosure, as it was formed, gradually received a distinctive name.

For all such objects as the English met with in this country, which were new and unknown to them, and for which their native speech supplied no names, they adopted the Keltic and Roman names, which they found already in use. Thus they retained the river names of this district, and some others which told of the Roman occupation. A paved street, a town with walls and gates, were things which our forefathers had never seen in the older England. They knew a 'way,' and a 'path;' they could raise a 'hedge' round a 'borough;' but a 'street' leading through a 'port' into a 'chester' was something so different from anything they had before seen, that they called all these objects by their Latin names².

Each English settlement, therefore, and many of the prominent features of the surrounding country, received at this time the names, which they still bear, of that dialect of low Dutch which is the origin of the English language³.

CHESTERTON.

Most of the new settlers coming from the south, entered this district by the road leading hither from *Dorocina*, newly-named by the English *Dwr* (water), *ceaster* (camp), soon changed to Dorchester. Accordingly, it is in the immediate neighbourhood of this road that we find most of the earliest English settlements. The Roman station, as exhibiting marks of former occupation, would first attract attention, and here two parties soon formed their separate *tons* on ground rising above the adjoining marsh, calling each, from their proximity to the old camp, *Chester-ton*.

WESTON.

Another party, settling westward of the camp, gave to their place of settlement a name taken from this position.

BURNE-CEASTER (BICESTER).

Others travelled northwards, until they came to the spot where the entrenchments of the camp which we suppose Allectus to have formed at the end of the third century invited occupation. Here was a large cleared and enclosed space, capable of holding several families, and possessing the two requirements which the new settlers invariably looked out for—a dry soil⁴, and an abundant water-supply. This settlement they named from this its chief feature, moulding the Latin word *castrum* to their own pronunciation, *Burne-ceaster*, the 'great camp.'

¹ The word *tun* assumes ordinarily in terminations the form of 'ton,' and is the most common termination of English local names. It is a kind of test word, by which we are enabled to discriminate the Anglo-Saxon villages. Of 1200 names of places given in vol. i. of Kemble's *Cod. Diplom. Ævi Sax.*, 137 are formed with 'tun.' The word is identical with the modern 'town,' the Dutch *tuin* ('garden'), and the German *sauu*, and was used by the Anglo-Saxons to signify, not that wherewith a space is enclosed, but the enclosed space itself. That it was principally house and homestead which bore this name is plain: e.g. in the laws of Alfred, i. § 2, we find in *Cyninges tune*; § 13 in

Eorles tune. Even at the present day the courtyard in some parts of England is called "town." See "Words and Places," by Rev. Isaac Taylor (1864), p. 119.

² Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxv.

³ I must here express my great obligation to the Rev. J. Earle, Anglo-Saxon Professor, and to the Rev. W. Stubbs, Modern History Professor, in the University of Oxford, also to the Rev. R. Holt, Vicar of Hillesden, Bucks, for the valuable assistance they have given in unravelling the meaning of many of the local names which follow.—J. C. B.

⁴ At Bicester the Oxford clay-bed ceases, and yields to the Cornbrash.

BURNE-HULLE (BIGNELL).

While the settlers in the old camp took possession of the land on its north and east sides, others proceeded to occupy the west side. The land here gradually rises to form a large round-headed plateau of elevated ground, which, probably by a comparison of it with the small, sharp-pointed *Gravenhulle* adjoining, was named *Burne-hulle*, the 'great hill,' written in later times *Bigge-hulle*, or *Bigen-hulle*.

WREC-WIC (WRETCHWICK).

A third party, going southwards, sought a place of safe retreat at the foot of the *Gravenhulle*. This was an uninviting spot, in the midst of thick woodland, and accessible only by wading through a tributary of the Ray river, where, from the stream often overflowing its banks into the low-lying ground on either side¹, the ford through it was unusually long (*Lang-ford*). The ground which the settlers here took in from the surrounding forest was called by the name most expressive of such a spot in their language, *Wic*², and because all communication with it was frequently cut off by floods, *Wrec-wic*, the 'shelter of exiles,' (*wrecca*, Anglo-Saxon, an 'exile.')

SOMERTON.

Immigrants journeying along the *Portway* found on the dry open ridge where it ran no suitable spot to settle on, until they came to one where an abundant spring of water was seen to be flowing, as it flows still, out of the Oolite rock beneath. The land falls rapidly from this spring, and widens into a large tract, which, from the overflowing of the Cherwell, is often turned into a sheet of water, and which in early times could have been little else than a marsh or fen. This local feature at once supplied the distinguishing name, and the settlement formed here was called *Somer-ton*, i.e. the 'Marsh, or Fen Ton'.¹

MIDLINGTON (MIDDLETON).

In a central position between the English settlements in the north and south of this district, lay a spot which had been previously occupied by the Romans. Some immigrants settled upon it, and, dropping its Roman name, whatever that may have been, called it *Midling-ton*, or *Middel-ing-ton*, the 'ton of the people of the middle.' The little swiftly-flowing stream close by they named the *Gagol*² (modernized to 'Gaggle'), the 'gurgling, or murmuring brook.'

MÆRTON (MERTON).

Not far from the point where the Dorchester road entered this district the Cornbrash limestone crops out, and forms a long narrow ridge of land, which in one place rises to form

¹ There is a dip in the ground between Bicester and Wretchwick, which now is meadow-land.

² *Wic*. This word in composition usually means a dwelling-place of one or more houses. The general idea would seem to be that of a place fenced and fortified, shut in, and so a place of security. There are still woods and copses known as "wicks." In such words as *Sandwich* it would seem to have the sense of a harbour. After the Conquest the original sense of *wic* was forgotten, and it meant only 'residence, dwelling.' It is the Greek *oikos*, the Latin *vicus*, the Celtic *gwic*, and it is difficult to assign the priority to any of them. The word "wick" in the north of England means a 'corner,' i.e. bending.' A Lancashire man will speak of "the wicks of his mouth."

¹ This word recalls "Somerton" in "Somersetshire," "Somerleaze" near Wells, &c. This prefix "Somer" has been the subject of much speculation. Some have referred it to the German *sumpf*, 'morass or fen,' and this meaning is certainly applicable to a large part of the country, and to other places which have this compound in their names. Others incline to the obvious word "summer," which would be a natural element to make names of.

² *Gagol* is a Saxon adjective meaning 'wanton, wild, frisky,' etc. This name given to a stream is peculiarly interesting to Anglo-Saxon scholars, as few local names, descriptive of natural features, bear so good a stamp of Saxon origin as this.

a low flat-topped hill, rising very gently from the plain of Oxford clay around it. This ridge and hill form a boundary-line between the land on either side of it, and was therefore described by the English as *Mær*, the 'boundary.' The rude homestead which they formed upon it was therefore called *Mær-ton*, the 'boundary-ton'.^a

LANGETON (LAUNTON).

Northwards along the line of the same road there lay another, but less elevated ridge, sloping down on both sides to two brooks. This ridge was soon cultivated for a considerable distance, and was consequently distinguished as *Lange-ton*, the 'long ton.'

STRATTON.

Still further on some immigrants settled down close to this road, or street (*Via Strata*), on its north side, where a good supply of water was at hand, and their settlement was therefore designated *Strat-ton*, the 'ton of the street.'

NEWTON.

At a later period some adventurers penetrated the woodland which lay further northwards, and on some rising ground formed two more settlements, calling them *New-ton*.

PETINTONE (PIDDINGTON). ERNECOTE (ARNCOT).

Soon after Ambresdon had been occupied, some of the settlers there made their way across the river Ray towards the great forest which they saw towering above them in the south and east. One party then cleared and cultivated a small piece of ground on the edge of it, near a stream which came down from the hill above, calling it *Petintone*, or *Pidintone* (the root of the word being the Keltic *pit*, or *pid*, meaning 'small,' from which the French *petit* is derived), while, at a short distance off, a man named Erne (modern form Hearn) built his solitary mud cottage called *Erne-cote*.^b

The settlers hitherto mentioned were, with a single exception, members of various clans, but four distinct families also came and established themselves within this district, on spots more or less remote from the mixed settlements,

BLECESDONE, BLICESTONE (BLECHINGTON).

The family of the Blæcings, taking possession of a hill in the south, which was then named from them *Blæcingas-don*, or *Blæcing-don*?;

^a The word *mær*, or, as it is generally written, *ge-mære*, denotes a 'boundary.' The same word occurs in the fifteen English villages called Marston, originally *Mær-stan*, i.e. Markstone, or boundary-stone. The line of hills that separates Winsley from Warleigh, near Bath, is called Mur-hill, and a place near Swindon, of much the same character, is spelt Murrell, both originally meaning *mær-hyl*, i.e. the 'boundary-hill.' Several places in Wiltshire are called Mar-ton, or Mar-tin, all of which are on the borders of either the county or hundreds.

^b *Cote* is a 'mud cottage,' distinguished from *hall*, a 'stone house.'

Both Piddington and Arncot were parts of the parish of Ambresdon. This implies that the first settlers at those places were connected with the settlement at Ambresdon.

^c The syllable *ing* was the usual Anglo-Saxon patronymic. It had very much the same significance as the prefix *Mac* in Scotland, *Ap* in Wales, or *Beni* among the Arabs, meaning 'son of.' It is declined in the genitive plural *inga*, when it is followed by some other name descriptive of the locality. Thus the patronymic *Blæcing* means a family descended from *Blæc* = modern name Bleach, &c., and is found also in Bletchingley in Surrey Blöchingen in Germany, and Blessignac in France.

GODENDON (GODDINGTON).

The family of the Godings occupying a ridge of high land in the north-east corner, called therefore *Godendon*, or *Godingdon*, the 'hill of the Godings';

FEERINGFORD (FRINGFORD).

A third family belonging to the clan "Fearing," or "Feering," settling down near a ford through the river Ouse, and calling the place of their habitation *Feering-ford*, or *Feeringasford*†.

BENTONE (BAINTON).

This settlement is called in Domesday *Bentone*, in the Hundred Rolls of Henry III., *Baddington*, and now Bainton. The Domesday forms are sometimes less true to the original than the later one, and thus *Baddington* may have been the original name. If so, it was probably derived from the name of one of the early settlers, "Badda." The original form may in that case have been *Baddantun*, the 'settlement of Badda,' or *Baddingatun*, the 'settlement of Badda's children.'

SAXENTON.

All the above-mentioned settlers belonged to the tribes of the Angles and Jutes, but among them there came also a small party of Saxons. These chose for their place of settlement a lonely spot‡, quite out of the line of the others, which was soon known as the *ton* of Saxons, the old provincial jealousies between the tribes long keeping them apart.

These nineteen appear to have been the first settlements of the English in this district, all effected probably before the end of the sixth, or very early in the seventh, century.

UNINHABITED COUNTRY.

Whatever civilization the English brought with them was at first confined to the same narrow lines as the Romans had occupied. At a little distance from the roads of the district the country remained untouched, and in as wild a state as if no Roman or English invaders had ever set foot within this island. Gradually the new settlers penetrated it, and gave distinctive names to particular localities.

FINEMERE (FINMERE).

In the north-east corner of this district, and beyond it, the gravels of the Boulder, or Glacial period, shew in great force†, and the whole country hereabouts, with the exception of the deeper valleys, is thickly covered with them. The pebbles are mostly of the Oolitic rocks, and are well rounded, and not very large, with a few larger half-angular blocks. Part of this gravel-bed, as it declined towards the river Ouse, retained the surface and flood-water, and thus was turned into a piece of wet moorland. This was soon distinguished as *Fenni-more*, or *mere*.

† This patronymic is found in Göttingen.

‡ See Keimble's "Saxons in England," i. 59, 464. The clan *Feering* were descended from some one whose name, whatever it may have been originally, was abbreviated to *Fear*, or *Feere*. This clan-name is probably the origin of Faringdon in several counties, and of Farington in Lancashire and Somersetshire. Feringbury, in Essex, is called *Pheringasbury* in Domesday.

† This spot was on the rising ground near and west of

Bainton, on the left-hand side of the road from Bicester to Banbury, where there is now a small copse within Bucknell parish. The tradition that this was the site of an ancient village still survives in Bucknell, but no traces of it now exist.

† These beds are found most plentifully about Hardwick; along a band about half-a-mile broad running from Finmere to Buckingham; and round Maids-Morton, Stowe, and Akeley. See "Geological Survey."

MEOXBERIE (MIXBURY).

The gravel-bed in another spot forms a wide level area, in the centre of more broken ground, such as in Anglo-Saxon language was commonly called *beria*, or *berie*^a (often corrupted into berry). This was therefore named *Meox-berie*, the 'middle flat-land.'

JUNIPER HILL.

To the north-west of the table-land the gravel drift disappears. Here a large expanse of heath and moor stretched away for a considerable distance, much of which remained until quite recent times. On an open and bleak eminence upon it, to which the name has been since given, clumps of the common Juniper grew in great abundance, varying with their greyish-green branches the tints of the landscape.

"This cirque of open ground
So light and green; the heather, which all round
Creeps quickly, grows not here, but the pale grass
Is strewn with rocks—and here and there
Dotted with holly, and with juniper."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

TORENESMERE (TUSMORE).

Not far from this a vegetable mould was found, good for burning. The English settlers did not, it seems, know of this valuable product, but as soon as the Danes came into its neighbourhood they discovered it, and called the spot *Torenes-mere*, the 'moor of the turbary or turf-land'; changed in subsequent times, and successively, to Thores-mere, Turs-mere, Tos-mere, Tus-mere, Tus-more. At a little distance just outside this district the Danes formed a settlement, calling it *Turues-ton*, 'turf's town' (now distorted into Tur-weston¹.)

SULTHORN (SOULDERN).

The western corner of this moor was covered with thorn-bushes. One of these attracted especial attention, either as being of unusual size, or as marking some burial-place, or other object of interest, and was called *Sul-thorn*², the 'great thorn.'

HETHE.

In the north part of this moorland the common brake, or *Bracken*, abounded, giving its name to *Brachelai*, or *Brachele*, the 'Brake-ley' (now Brackley), while on its south side the common ling

^a "Most of our Glossographers in the name of places have confounded the termination of *berie* with that of bury and borough; whereas the true sense of the word *beria*, Engl. *berie*, is a flat wide campagne, as from sufficient authorities is proved by the learned Du Fresne in his Glossary, &c. So the spacious mead between Oxford and Iffley was in the reign of King Athelstan called *Bery*. Such were the *Berie-meadows* which, tho' Sir H. Spelman interprets to be the Demesne-meadows, or Mannor-meadows, yet were truly any open flat meadows that lay adjoining any vill or firm. Hence our warrens were called *Cony-berries*. A flat threshing-floor is in the north called a *Berry-sted*, and *Berrying-sted*; *berrier*, a 'thresher,' as *Bersted* in Kent was *Beri-sted*, or an 'open flat place.' Hence the termination of many places that are so situate,

as *Mixberie*, *Acornberie*, now Cornberie, &c."—*Kennel's Glossary*, P. A.

² The word 'turf,' if not distinctly Scandinavian, is so much more largely used in Icelandic than in any other of the Gothic languages, that it is probable the Danes introduced it among us. The Danes settled themselves in Northamptonshire, on the borders of Oxfordshire.

¹ This malformation of the word has arisen from dividing it in the wrong place, and then classing it among places called Weston. The breaking of a word in two in the wrong place is not uncommon; thus Hook Norton is from *Hocnera-tun*, and Maple Durham from *Mapulderham*.

² *Sel*, Anglo-Saxon, is 'great.' It occurs in Selwood, the 'great forest.'

or heather grew luxuriantly, and made wild nature beautiful hereabouts. This garden of the district was called *Hethe*. By a very familiar interchange of t and c in writing, this word came to be written *Heche*, and then, by the dropping of the initial H, *Eche*, which is the name given to the village afterwards built here in the Hundred Rolls of Edward the First's reign.

FULWELL, WOOLASTON.

In this moorland, formed of the upper band of the Great Oolite, several wells, or natural springs, were found: one, which the English distinguished as *Fule-well*, the 'fowl's well', from the many birds which were seen frequenting it; and another as *Willas*, the 'Wells,' which gave its name to the little village afterwards built near it,—*Willaston* or *Willarston*, now Woolaston^b.

SEVEWELLE (SHELLOWELL).

A third spring differed remarkably from the others. Instead of rising to the surface of the ground the water trickled through a bed of gravel or stones, which it loosened, and turned into a wet spongy piece of ground, escaping therefrom by a channel which it made for itself underground. This was named *Sevewelle* or *Sivewelle*, which means the 'oozy or ditch-well'. This name became soon abbreviated to *Swell*. Subsequently a prefix was added to it, *Schelde* or *Schalde*, a word descriptive of the loosening of the earth by the action of the water^d. Thus the name assumed the form of *Schelde-swell* or *Schalde-swell*, afterwards pronounced *Shel-swell*, which accurately means the 'earth-loosening oozy spring'.

COTEFORD (COTTISFORD).

A ford had been long used through one of the streams which help to drain the north-east part of this district. A hut was built near it, perhaps to mark the spot, which then became known as *Cote-ford* or *Cotes-ford*. For the same reason the stream was named *Crowell*^e, which means the 'hut or hovel-stream.'

FERTWELL (FRITWELL).

A spring on the opposite side of the moorland was called *Fret-well*, written by the compilers of the Domesday *Fert-well*^g. This name may have been derived from *freten* = 'to eat

* The word fowl had originally a much wider meaning than it has at present. Any flying creature was a fowl, and in this sense we find the word in Foulsham, Fulham, Fullbrook, Fullwood, Foulney.

^b "This *Willarston*, in the parish of Mixbury, seems to have been so called from its situation nigh some noted well or spring. So Wynhale, formerly wrote *Wynhale*, is guest to be so named from the wells or springs in several parts; *Willas* and *Willan* in old English were wells."—*Kennett's P. A.*, Ano. MCCLXXII.

^c Halliwell explains the word *sew* to mean a 'covered drain or wet ditch.' The same account is given by Grose and Pegge of the word *seugh*. Another possible sense of the same word, regarding it rather as a verb, is 'to ooze,' which Halliwell also gives, and which would connect it with the Anglo-Saxon word *sigan*, as also with the Anglo-Saxon substantive *sic*. See Kemble's Glossary in vol. iii. of *Cod. Diplom.*

^d *Schelde*, *schalde*, modern 'shel,' comes from the word

which has produced the substantive *shale*, i.e. 'loose rubble,' and the verb to 'give way,' to 'slide down.' See Halliwell's Dictionary.

This was another way of saying the same thing, as had been signified by *sive*, namely, that there was a wearing away of the ground, or an undermining of it, by the action of the water. Thus Sheldon, near Teignmouth in Devon, seems to be so called, because the sea eats away the *don* or down, which makes the most prominent feature of the place.

* This spring, and the stream issuing from it, have been lost sight of in the long pond which has been formed out of them in Shelswell park.

^f *Crow* is probably the Welsh *craw*, the Irish and Cornish *cro*, which means a hut or hovel, and also a fold.

^g *Fret* and *Fert* were simply interchangeable forms, just as 'run' was *yrn*, 'grass' was *gars*, 'third' was *thrid*, 'bird' was *brid*.

or waste away,' and may have been given because of the spring's broken, jagged edge, caused by the continual action of the water, or from *frid* = 'peace,' because, from the trees which grew around and hid it, it was a covert, a place of concealment, a refuge from pursuit for beast or man^b.

HERDWIC (HARDWICK).

At a little distance from the heath and moor-land, a considerable extent of ground lying on the bed of gravel drift yielded a fine grass, which served as good pasturage for cattle. Hither the dwellers in the tons sent as many of their farm-stock as could be spared to graze through each summer and autumn. This part was therefore named *Herdewick*, the 'herd's station.'

STOKE.

A fold, or enclosed place for the cattle thus sent out to pasture, soon became necessary. A suitable spot was therefore chosen close by a running stream, and trees were quickly felled to form the cattle-pen. This was called *Stoc*^c, i.e. 'a place stockaded, surrounded with stocks or piles.'

ARDULVESLEY (ARDLEY).

A piece of ground on the edge of the pasture-land was, after some time, appropriated by an English settler named Ardulf, or, in full Anglo-Saxon orthography, *Eardwulf*. This possession of his was named from him *Ardulve's-ley* or *ley*^k, the 'field of Ardulf.'

FEWCOTT.

The few labourers who were employed in the cultivation of this outlying enclosure dwelt just outside it, and the spot where their huts stood was called *Few-cott*.

BUKENHULLE (BUCKNELL).

The ground falls southwards from Ardley, and a large part of this sloping ground was covered with wood and scrub. A part of this woodland became distinguished from the rest, either from the growth of beech-trees upon it, whereby it received its name of *Boccen* or *Buccen-hulle*, the 'hill of beeches' (Anglo-Saxon *boc*, a 'beech-tree'), or from its being a favourite resort of the deer, who came to quench their thirst in the hollow or basin here, which gathered within it the surface-water from the surrounding land, and who may have given the name of *Buccan-hulle*, the 'hill of the buck' (Anglo-Saxon *bucca*), afterwards changed to *Bukenhulle*¹ or *Bokenhulle*. A spring near was known as *Hawk-well*, and a ford through the stream from it as *Stan-ford*, i.e. the 'Stone ford.'

^b Sanctuaries were called *Fred-stole*, i.e. the 'seat of peace.' So Frederic means 'wealthy or powerful in peace;' Winfred, 'victorious peace;' Reinfred, 'sincere peace.'

In late times the village built here was commonly described as "Fritwell in the Elms."

^c The Anglo-Saxon *stoc* is a common suffix, as in Basingstoke, Alverstoke, Tavistock, &c., and is also frequently found as a single name. It has much the same meaning as *stow*, viz. 'place or habitation.'

^k Ley or Legh is a form of the Anglo-Saxon *leah*. It is defined in a charter (*Cod. Dipl.* 190) as equivalent to *campus* (= 'field'). Kemble thinks that the root of this

word, still common in English poetry, is *liegan* (= 'to lie') and that in all probability it originally denoted meadows lying fallow after a crop. In the "Weald" of Kent and Sussex, the leys were the open forest glades, and hence some have supposed that the word was applied to any open space in a wood where the cattle liked to lie.

¹ The division of the present compound Bucknell is *Buckn-ell*, *Buckn* being the *Buken* of the old orthography. In like manner Buckingham is probably named after this animal; perhaps not immediately, but mediately from the *Buccingas*, who took their name from *bucca*, just as Hertford from the hart.

HAIFORDE (HEYFORD, LOWER).

Along the west side of this district a ridge of high land runs, which slopes down gradually to the valley of the Cherwell river. At one point, where the stream runs wide and shallow, the aboriginal Britons had found a fordable passage. The English settlers having established themselves on both sides of this river, much frequented this ford. Then, to mark its course, especially in flood-time, stakes were driven down on one or both sides of it, forming a rough hedge. Hence this ford was known as *Haiforde*, the 'hedge-ford' ^m.

HEGFORD (HEYFORD, UPPER).

Higher up the stream, and higher in elevation ⁿ, there was another spot where the ground in the river was firm enough to afford a passage for men and cattle°. This was therefore called *Hegford*, the 'high-ford' ^p.

On a ridge of ground on the east side of this district, between Launton and Goddington, there is a natural spring of water, which comes from so great a depth that its temperature prevents it from ever freezing^q. The overflow from this spring trickled down the hill-side, and, having no course to run in, turned the ground over which it spread itself into a marsh. It was therefore named *Pow* or *Poo*, the 'marsh stream' ^r.

POWDELE (POODLE).

The flat ground at the bottom of this hill took its name from this local feature, and was called *Pow-dele* or *Poo-dele* (since corrupted into Poodle), the valley of the *Pow* or *Poo*, or occasionally *le Powes*, 'the marsh.'

POWDON (POUNDON).

The rising ground above the spring was likewise named *Pow-don* or *Poo-don*, now changed into Poundon. Part of this hill was in later times distinguished by the thorns which covered it, as Thorndon ^s.

BLAKETHURNE (BLACKTHORN).

The thorn-bushes extended themselves for some distance from this point southwards, giving a name to another spot, where, in the wet clay soil, they grew very luxuriantly. But here they were the Blackthorn, or Sloe, as distinguished from the White or Hawthorn. No name was given to this thornland in Anglo-Saxon times, nor until much later, but in the Hundred Rolls of Edward I. the name *Blakethurn* first appears. This word is evidently derived from the Anglo-

^m A *haigh* or *hay*, is a place surrounded by a hedge. Compare the Dutch *haag*, an 'enclosure;' the old High German *hag*, a 'town;' the German *hagen*, to 'hedge;' the French *haie*, a 'hedge;' and the English *ha-ha* and *hawthorn*, or 'hedge-thorn.' *Haia* is a term often used in Domesday. See T. Taylor's "Words and Places."

ⁿ There is a fall of about twenty feet in the surface of the ground between Upper and Lower Heyford.

^o A ford was the road across a stream, and the word is probably of British origin. A ford did not originally imply only a place where the water is shallow, while on either side it is deep, but also a place in a stream where some rock, or gravel, or solid ground, afforded a sure footing.

^p Almost all traces of this ford have now disappeared, but they were clearly visible within almost living memory near the mill. The stream is still fordable there in dry summers, but the canal has destroyed any use being now made of the old ford.

^q This spring may be found on the hill above Poodle Farm, in Goddington parish. It has been long carefully enclosed from the surrounding fields.

^r This is the name given to many sluggish streams in Scotland. It properly means a fen or marsh. *Powdike* is the ditch made in the fens for carrying off the water.

^s This name occurs constantly in the Court Rolls of Launton Manor.

Saxon *blæc*, or, as the Germans would write it, *blāc* (the vowel, whether written *æ* or *a*, being short), meaning black[†], and Anglo-Saxon *þorn* or *þyrn* (thorn).

If we turn now to the immediate neighbourhood, as it was found by the English conquerors, we shall see that this district was much isolated from the surrounding country. A large tract of forest and of marsh hemmed it in on its south and east sides.

ODMOOR (OTMOOR).

At the south-east corner, beyond the river Ray, there stretched out a long, dreary flat, formed of the Oxford Clay. That a lake once existed here is very probable, and that such would be formed here again if the narrow part of the valley of the Ray at Islip were to be effectually barred by the crossing of the rocks, as once no doubt it was, is certain[‡]. In later times, when the river became contracted to a narrower channel in the midst of a wider marsh, innumerable inundations may have taken place, and spread a level sediment over the area. The moor or marsh thus formed is the natural reservoir of the overflowing waters of the Ray and Cherwell rivers, and works were very early undertaken to keep these waters back within this natural basin. Perhaps Roman, but more probably early English, engineers made a great embankment, 10 feet high, across the lower end of the moor, having three openings cut through it, each having a flood-gate, while a road ran along its entire length[‡]. It was thus made to present very frequently a broad expanse of water, while at all times it was subject to flooding. The English, therefore, soon named it "Od" or "Ot"-moor, i.e. the 'water or watery-moor.'

OTENDON (ODDINGTON).

A few English settled on its sides, who gained a livelihood from the eels and fish which abounded in the waters, and from the flocks of geese and ducks which were attracted thither, making their chief home on some rising ground, which was called from them "Otingdon" or "Otendon," the 'hill of the people of the Ot,' now Oddington.

BURNEWOOD.

A striking feature in the landscape of this part of Britain in the sixth century must have been the vast forest which lay to the south and east of this district. It, and other woodlands

[†] The word Blackthorn is not Anglo-Saxon; the spelling of the word *Blakethorne*, with the vowel *e* placed after the final *k*, would, according to strict rule, be a proof that the preceding vowel *a* was long. If it were so, then 'blake' would seem to be derived from Anglo-Saxon *blāc* (meaning *lucidus*, *splendens*, *pallidus*), whence comes the English word 'bleak.' But then what could this mean as a prefix of thorn? 'Blake,' meaning black, occurs in writings of Edward the First's time; and the word may have taken this form instead of *blæc* or *blāc*, from a confusion in the popular mind between the proper pronunciation of *blāc* (*lucidus*), and *blæc* or *blāc* (*niger*).

[‡] Professor Phillips' "Geology of Oxford."

[‡] The road still exists, but the flood-gates were destroyed about fifty years ago, when the proprietors of the land around the moor obtained a special Act of Parliament for draining and enclosing it. There is no doubt that the letting loose the great body of water which was here kept

back, now-a-days greatly increased by the artificial drainage of the surrounding country, has helped to increase the great floods which have recently, year after year, troubled the neighbourhood of Oxford.

Dr. Buckland used to assert in his lectures that "a great mistake was made in the Otmoor Inclosure, for instead of bringing the superfluous water as now by the circuitous bed of the Cherwell into the Isis at Oxford, it ought to have been (and might just as easily have been) carried directly into the Thame river, and so into the Thames several miles below Oxford."—*Cox's Recollections of Oxford*, p. 125.

[†] From the Sansc. *ud*, 'water,' come Sansc. *udon*, Gr. *ὕδωρ*, Slav. *woda*, Goth. *wato*, Germ. *wasser*, Engl. *water*. We find this root in the river names of the Otter, Odder, Woder, Adur, in England, the Odde in France, the Udar in Russia. See Ferguson's "River Names."

to the north of it, appears to have formed a part of *Cerdice's Leah*^a, or the 'Lea of Cerdic,' the Saxon king. Starting from the banks of the river Cherwell at *Etone* (Wood-Eaton), it occupied all the country between that river and the Thames. Then running northwards, along the side of Otmoor, and the course of the river Ray, it crossed the *Akeman Street*, and skirting *Grennedone* (Gren-don), the 'green-hill,' under the wood, it reached to *Ahecote* (Edgcott). This forest was named by the early settlers in the neighbourhood *Burne-wuda*^a (Frenchified by the Normans into *Berne-wuda*), the 'great wood.' Oak-trees grew in its low-lying parts. Some of the oaks still standing in Wootton park are said to be the original trees of this forest, and other places where these grew are traceable in the names *Acham* (Noke), *Achelei* (Oakley), the *ham* (the place), and the *lea* (the field) of *Ac* or *Ake*, the 'oak,' and *Ahecote* (Edgcott), where, among the oaks, a hut was built. The higher parts were covered with ash-trees, as at *Assedone* (Ashendon), and thorn-bushes. The highest hill in the centre of this forest took its name from the latter, being called *Brehulle* or *Bruhella*^b (now Brill), the 'hill of briars or thorns.'

MUSWELL.

In the thick of the trees and thorns which covered the adjoining hill, the bountiful spring or well was found, which had often quenched the thirst of the Roman soldiers stationed near it. This, from the carpet of moss surrounding it, was named by the English *Musse-well*, the 'mossy-well.'

BOARSTALL.

That wild boars out of the wood infested that part of this district which lay nearest to it, even to a date after the Norman Conquest, is evidenced by the traditions which have come down to us about their occasional extinction.

Nigel, the forester of Bernwood, as the legend runs,

"Stoode
Looking out a dore
And there as he was lookinge
He was ware of a wyld bore.
"He was ware of a wyld bore
Would have werreyed a man :
He pull'd forth a wood kniffe,
Fast thither that he ran.
He brought in the bore's head
And quitted him like a man."

For a service of this kind, Edward the Confessor is said to have rewarded Nigel with a grant of one hide of land, on which he built a mansion, naming it *Boarstall*, to commemorate his own exploit and the royal bounty. Hearne, the Antiquary, questions this legend, suggesting

^a Dr. Guest says that in Chearsley, the name of a village in Bucks, which lay within this forest, we probably have a corruption of the old Anglo-Saxon name *Cerdice's Leah*.

^a No mention is made of *Bernewood* in the Domesday Survey, because at that time it was no longer a simple forest held as part of the royal demesnes, but much of it had been cleared, and was then inhabited. Villages had been formed at *Acham* (Noke), where "a wood 4 quarentens long and 3 broad" was part of the manor, and at the

following places, which all then possessed the right of feeding a certain number of pigs in the forest around them : *Wermelle* (Worminghall), 200; *Achelei* (Oakley), 800; *Brunhelle* (Brill), 200; *Ottone* (probably Wootton), 200; *Dortone* (Dorton), 100; *Lutegarser* (Ludgershall), 40; *Chentone* (Quainton), 100; *Votesdone* (Waddesdon), 150; *Ahecote* (Edgcott), 100. Two perambulations of the forest made in 1294 and 1315 give the boundaries of what remained of it at those times. See Kennett's P. A.

^b See Kennett's P. A., chap. viii.

that the name is derived from the Saxon *Burgh-Stall*, a seat on the side of a hill. The true derivation of the name is, however, here unimportant, since the existence of the tradition is sufficient to shew that wild boars must have existed in the woodland district of this neighbourhood.

THE MARSH.

Further northwards, on the east side of this district, near one of the sources of the river Ray, there was another long expanse of marsh-land, which in later times gave its name to the village which was built upon its edge, *Merse* or *Mersa*, now Marsh Gibwen or Gibbon.

ROCKWOOD.

Beyond this marsh, another long and deep belt of forest, called "Rockwood," covered the country for a considerable distance northwards and eastwards^c. It approached this district at Charndon, originally named *Chanen-den*, which may mean the 'Canon's Wood,' from its belonging to the canons or monks of Fenger in Normandy^d, and then formed a boundary to it near Newton and Finmere, *Ceteode* (Chetwood) being a *chit* or cottage within the wood. Harts or deer hereabouts came out of the forest in great numbers to graze and exercise in the more open country, as the name of the village Barton Hart's-tone still evidences; and that wild boars here also troubled the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages is clear. There existed in the manor of Chetwode a singular right to levy a tax upon all cattle or swine in certain surrounding parishes, called the "Rhyne Toll," which was granted to the head of the Chetwode family and his heirs for ever, in reward for his having killed a fierce wild boar, which had long been the terror of the inhabitants of these parts, and a remarkable testimony to the truth of this tradition was afforded within the present century. In the parish of Barton Hart's-tone, within a mile from Chetwode Manor-house, a few hundred yards from the road leading to the Bicester and Finmere road, close to the boundaries of Tingewick wood, a large mound of earth formerly existed, surrounded by a ditch known by the country people as the "Boar's Pond." It remained overgrown with gorse and underwood, until it was brought under cultivation at the enclosure, about 1810. At that time the tenant in occupation levelled the whole of the mound, filling up the greater portion of the ditch, and in removing the earth discovered the remains of a large boar of enormous size. The animal had been evidently laid at full length upon the ground, doubtless on the very spot where it had been killed, and the earth heaped up over it from all sides. A portion of the bones, which were well preserved, remained under the charge of the occupier of the land, until the late Sir John Chetwode succeeded to the estate, when he took them into his own possession, and afterwards exhibited them to the Archæological Society for Bucks, at their annual meeting in 1855. The field where the pond was is still known by the name of "Boar's-head Field."

^c A glance at the map of Buckinghamshire will shew the ground covered by this forest. The names of Adstock (*Edestoche*, i.e. 'Edda's wood,' from *stocce*, the 'trunk of a tree'), Thornborough, Thornton, Buckingham (*Buchenham*, the 'home of bucks or deer'), Foscote (*Foxescote*), Akeley (or Oakeley), Bidleston (called originally *Betesdene*, *Bittlesden*, or *Bythesden*, from *den*, a 'wood'), shew that these villages were once within the forest, while the rights of the other villages to have pannage for their swine, as given in the Domesday Survey, shew that even at that late period a large part of the primeval forest yet remained; the four Claydon's (*Claindone*), 390 hogs; Hillesdon (*Ulesdone*), 100; Preston (*Prestone*, i.e. 'Priest's-ton'), 200; Chetwood, 100;

Barton, 100; Tingewick (*Tedenwicke*, the *wic* or village of *tede*, 'pasture'), 800; Westbury, 250; Shalleston (*Celdestone*, 'Cold East town'), 50; Stow, 50.

^d Browne Willis's History of Twyford, in his "History of Bucks."

^e See a Paper on "The Rhyne of Chetwode," by the Rev. H. Roundell, in the "Records of the Buckinghamshire Archæological Society," vol. ii. p. 151.

The custom observed every Christmas Day at Queen's College, Oxford, of serving up a boar's head, with the tradition which accounts for the origin of the ceremony, is another testimony to the prevalence of boars in this neighbourhood.

LILLINGSTON.

The Roman road from *Dorocina* to *Lactodorum* had been cut straight through this forest, and after the English conquest some immigrants travelled along it to form a lonely settlement in the thick of the woodland. They were a single family, belonging to that of the *Lillings* or *Lullings*, and their clearance in the forest was therefore called *Lillings-ton* or *Lullings-ton*¹."

CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH SETTLERS TO CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity, like Roman civilization, had reached this district at an early date. It is certain that some Christian saints were buried at no great distance from it,—St. Brenold at Bampton, St. Hyerith, virgin, at Chiselhampton, St. Donaverah at Beckley, and that their shrines for a long time attracted much attention before the end of the sixth century. But our English forefathers swept away Christianity, as they did every other existing institution, from the land. Coming from countries which had known nothing of Roman civilization, and coming to be in Britain just what they had been in the old country which they had left, they appeared simply as destroyers. So, knowing nothing more of the Christian religion than that it was the faith of the people whom they were driving before them into the fastnesses of the West, they thought no more of paying attention to it, than they did to any other thing which they found here, whether it were Celtic or Roman². Thus, for a short season after the English invasion, this district lapsed again into pagan heathendom, though the few British who lived on mingled with their conquerors, probably retained their Christian faith.

Forty years passed after the arrival of Augustine³ (A.D. 597); the Christian Church had established a footing in Kent, East Anglia, and Northumbria; the sees of Canterbury, Rochester, and London had been founded; three occupants of the throne of Canterbury had died before the message of the Gospel reached this part of central England. And when the message came, it came not, as might have been expected, from the Italian missionaries then resident at Canterbury, but from a source entirely unlooked for, and new. There was living in Genoa a zealous and devoted man, Birinus, who was studying the Teutonic language in order to fit himself as a missionary to the distant West⁴. In 634⁵ he received permission from Pope Gregory to visit England, and, under the idea then current at Rome that the Kentish mission had failed of the purpose for which it had been instituted, he was directed to apply for consecration, not to Honorius then Archbishop of Canterbury, but to Asterius, Bishop of Genoa. At the same time he was directed not to interfere with the mission already established in Kent, but to confine his exertions to the centre of the island. Having then travelled through France to a sea-port in the Channel, he embarked in a Saxon vessel for Britain. A story, no doubt the invention of a later age, is told of his voyage,—that, having gone some distance from land, he remembered that he had left behind him a corporal containing the blessed Sacrament, which he had celebrated as his last

¹ This patronymic is found also in three English counties, and in Lollinghausen in the Westphalian district of Germany.

² Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. i. p. 20.

³ Kennett imagines that Augustine visited this part of England. If he did so, it was only to travel through it, for his mission effected little more than the organization of a church in Kent. See story told of Augustine's coming to *Cumpton* (Long Compton in Warwickshire), on the edge of Oxfordshire, and the parish priest complaining to

him of the non-payment of his tithes by the lord of the manor, given in Kennett's P. A., chap. vii.

⁴ Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," vol. i. chap. ii.

⁵ There is a little doubt as to the exact year of Birinus' coming. The Saxon Chronicle is most to be depended on, because it was written by an inhabitant of the kingdom of the West Saxons, and so deserves especial credit in its relation of the affairs of that kingdom. Cynegils reigned from A.D. 611 to A.D. 643.

religious act on shore, and, considering it useless to ask the heathen sailors to return, and also impossible to leave the sacred elements behind him, supported by a strong faith, he stepped out of the ship upon the waters, which instantly became firm under his feet; that he then walked to land, and having secured what he sought, returned in the same way to the ship, which had remained stationary from the moment he had left it. The crew of the ship were Saxons, belonging to this country, who, being astonished at the miracle, lent a ready ear to his instructions, and became the first converts of his mission¹. Birinus landed in Hampshire, but finding, to his astonishment, that no effort had been made by the missionaries at Canterbury to Christianize the inhabitants of Wessex, he determined to stay among them for a while before he advanced further in quest of other fields of labour^m. Before long his preaching found acceptance with Cynegils their king, and he was admitted to the king's court. The moment of his arrival was very opportune, for directly afterwards, in A.D. 635, Oswald, the zealous Christian king of the Northumbrians, paid a visit to king Cynegils to ask the hand of his daughter in marriage. Oswald's influence was highly favourable in seconding the good efforts of Birinus, and before he returned home he had seen both his bride and his father-in-law admitted into the Christian Church. The baptism took place at Dorchesterⁿ in Oxfordshire, which had then become the royal city, and here the two kings determined to place Birinus as the first bishop of the West Saxons.

From this home on the winding Thames, guarded by its Roman dykes, and looking up at the mighty hill-fort of *Sinodun*, the proud relics of earlier days, Birinus went about to bear the simple message of the Gospel. In the many missionary journeys which he undertook, he must often have traversed the old Roman road from Dorchester to, and beyond, this district, and thus the inhabitants of the English settlements hereabouts were among those who received the good bishop's earliest care. One of his halting-places would certainly be *Burnceaster*, and here no doubt he not seldom gathered together as many as were ready to listen to his preaching. Other clergy associated with him took up the work which the bishop had commenced^o, and soon a piece of ground just outside the village was set apart as the appointed place of assembly for the missionaries and their converts. For the more convenient baptizing of the latter, the spot selected was near a spring, or natural well, which, from the great Christian emblem, a rude cross of wood, set up to mark it, was soon distinguished as *Crucwell*, pronounced *Crocwell*^p, the 'Well of the Cross.'

¹ Malmesbury and others relate this tradition. Milner ("History of Winchester," vol. i. p. 89) says, "This prodigy is so well attested by most of our judicious historians, that those who have had the greatest interest to do so have not dared openly to deny it."

^m Bede, H. E. iii. See Dr. Maclear's "Conversion of the West," chap. vi. (the English), S. P. C. K.

ⁿ The baptism of Cynegils by Birinus is still represented by an old font in Winchester Cathedral.

^o Bede, who wrote his Ecclesiastical History in A.D. 731, says of Birinus that "having built and dedicated churches, and called many people to the Lord, he departed to the Lord, and was buried in the same city (Dorchester); and many years after, when Hædde held the bishopric, he was removed thence to the city of *Venta* (i.e. *Venta Belgarum*, now Winchester), and was buried in the church of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

^p Starting from the Latin missionary word *crucem* we

know that this would in colloquy lose its *m*, and be reduced to *cruce*, just as in Italian it has become *croce*. In fact, so little is this *m* supposed to have been heard in the sixth and seventh centuries that we might as well take *cruce* for our point of outset. From this point the native pronunciation diverges into two forms. 1. The ruder and more numerous utterance would be monosyllabic, namely, *cruc*, pronounced as 'crook.' Under modified forms like *cróc*, *crók*, *cróg*, *croh*, we find the word in the names *Cróc-ford*, *Cróchyrist*, *Crócgelad*, *Crókrig*, *Crogden* (Croydon), *Crokham*, *Crogleah* (names which may all be found in the *Codex Diplomaticus* by means of Kemble's Index). The other course was to retain the second syllable, and the effect of the *e* would be quickly to change the *u* by sympathy into *y* (*cryce*). The proper vowel of this word would be *y*, but the distinction between *y* and *i* was little kept, and the word became *crice* and *cric*, which gives us our word 'crutch' (which simply meant a staff with a cross-piece at

KIRKLINGTON (KIRTLINGTON).

Another place of larger assembly suggested itself at the junction of the *Portway* with the *Akeman Street* in the south-west part of this district. There was direct communication with this spot from Dorchester by the first of these roads, and here could come together not only the dwellers within this district, but others also from the west side of the Cherwell.

It is most probable that a missionary soon took up his permanent or occasional residence on this very accessible spot. The people were accustomed to assemble from great distances, whenever notice was given that a missionary was present at any well-known station. Thus this became a chief place of concourse. A small church was soon built, the sooner because the spot was as yet uninhabited, and a shelter was needed from the weather; the first probably in this district. Families soon came to settle round the church, and the village thus formed was known as *Kirklington*, i.e. the 'ton of the people of the Kirk or Church.'

Thus this district owes its Christianity to two sources. The mission which led directly to its conversion was Roman, though subsequent to, and independent of, that under Augustine. The latter had converted the kingdom of Kent, but the kingdom of Wessex, consisting of Hampshire, Dorsetshire, part of Devonshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, part of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, with Middlesex, up to the Chiltern hills, was converted through the labours of Birinus and the French missionaries, into whose hands Wessex came after the death of Birinus. The power, however, which gave Birinus' mission its starting-point^a was one at variance with Rome, the old national Church of Britain. And thus, as from Dorchester there came at first to this district its Roman civilization, so from the same place came also its later Christian teaching.

LATER SETTLEMENTS.

We have supposed the first English settlers to have taken up their abode in this district about the end of the sixth century, and to have established their dominion throughout it. Soon after that date, other families and parties of kindred origin, having landed at various points of the British coast, made their way inland. We may therefore conclude that in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries most of the hitherto uninhabited parts became the homes of new settlers, who retained for their dwelling-places the names which they found already attached to each spot.

Thus the population of this district became essentially Teutonic. After the English Conquest nothing Roman was allowed to remain, and there were but few Celtic inhabitants to extirpate. The name of almost every village and local feature, except the rivers, was given by the English; and these local names bear witness of the source whence the present population has sprung.

its head), and 'cricket;' and is found in the local names of Crick, Cricklade, Crickhowell, &c.

(See a letter on the derivation of the word 'Church,' from *crucem*, by Professor Earle, in the *Guardian* Newspaper, May 15, 1878.)

^a Oswald, the king of Northumbria, through whose influence Birinus was favourably received by Cynegils, king of the West Saxons, had been educated in Scotland among members of the ancient British Church. So when he determined to attempt the re-establishment of Christianity in his kingdom, he did not consult the Italian missionaries at

Canterbury, but sent to Scotland, and obtained his missionaries from the Celtic bishops. The new bishop then placed over Northumbria, Aidan, had been a distinguished monk of Iona. See Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. ii. Pt. I., chap. ii.; Hook's "Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury," vol. i. chap. ii.

"Before the end of the sixth century the Teutonic dominion stretched from the German Ocean to the Severn and from the English Channel to the Firth of Forth."--*Freeman's Norman Conquest*, vol. i. chap. ii.

FORMATION OF VILLAGES.

The beginning of every village was "the tun," which the first settler formed. This was in most cases on the spot now occupied by the Manor-house. In designating the home and homestead the *tun* or 'enclosure,' it is evident that the rest of the land which the settlers took possession of remained unenclosed. Other dwelling-houses and cattle-yards gradually grew up around the original one. A fence of some kind was then drawn around these, and the name *tun* applied to the whole collected enclosure. Hence a *tun* or *ton* soon came to signify not merely a single dwelling-house and its homestead, but a whole village. In the immediate vicinity of each *tun* small pieces of grass-land were next enclosed for the rearing of calves, and for the feeding of such other cattle as it might be thought necessary to keep near home. Around these home-enclosures lay the arable-land. The original settler broke up and cultivated as much as was sufficient for the maintenance of his single family. This quantity (at first = 100 acres, more or less,) was afterwards called a 'hide,' from the Anglo-Saxon *hyd*, a 'house or dwelling;' and as, after some experience, it appeared that this contained about as much land as a single team of oxen^s could plough in the course of a year, including such as lay fallow year by year, it became identical with what the Normans called a *carucate*, or 'ploughland.' Into these two quantities all land was, after some time, divided; but, inasmuch as the tilling and produce of land depended on the nature of the soil, these varied exceedingly in different parts of the same district. As the population of a village increased, the number of hides or carucates belonging to it increased in like proportion. The arable-land was divided into three parts of nearly equal size, which were cultivated on the three-field system of husbandry, 1. wheat; 2. oats or beans; 3. fallow. Where the soil was heavy and wet it was thrown up in high ridges, wide spaces between them being left uncultivated. All work upon the arable-land was done in common, the possessors yoking their draught-cattle together in a common team, for ploughing, harrowing, &c. Any low-lying land adjoining the arable was generally reserved as meadow-ground for hay. The land most distant from the village was designedly left in its natural state to supply wood, and to serve as pasture for the cattle employed on the cultivated part. The pasturage here soon came to be of two kinds, the better kind being limited as to the numbers and kinds of cattle fed upon it, and therefore called 'stinted,' the rest being common, on which any one could turn out during the summer as many cattle as he had fodder to support during the winter. This uncultivated land, surrounding the arable, whether heath, forest, fen, or pasture, separated the possessions of one tribe of settlers from another, and was therefore called a *mark*^t or *march* (meare), i.e. as the word denotes, something marked out, or defined, having settled boundaries. The freemen having rights of common upon it were called 'markmen.'

Thus each township or village was one great farm, tenanted by individuals as simple occupiers, and managed according to one uniform plan,—an independency, not, as now, consisting of several properties managed by separate husbandries, but a community associated in the use and culture of the land, which was the common property of allⁿ. No permanent enclosures,

^s The team of a plough in the middle ages generally consisted of not less than eight draught-cattle. Such teams were in use in England as late as the end of the last century. Arthur Young speaks of a place in Sussex where eight oxen and one horse were yoked to one plough.

^t See Kemble's "Anglo-Saxons in England," on "The Mark," vol. i.

ⁿ See an interesting book entitled "On the Agricultural Community of the Middle Ages, and Inclosures of the sixteenth century in England," translated from the German of E. Nasse, by Col. Ouvry, 1872.

except those near the homesteads within the village, were thought of^{*}. The cultivated arable-land, from seed-time until the end of harvest, and the meadows from the commencement of the growth of grass until the end of the haymaking season, were protected by fences against the access of cattle and wild beasts; but at the conclusion of these seasons, the fences were again either partially or wholly removed[†], and the land withdrawn for private use for the purposes of cultivation again reverted to the community.

A mill was necessary for the grinding of corn, and one was soon built in every village, on the nearest stream, windmills not being introduced into this country until the early part of the twelfth century. Next followed a little church, generally formed of the trunks of oak-trees, placed side by side together, and covered with reeds or rushes. Such were the first simple, but dull surroundings of every English village. No bright-looking homesteads, like the Roman villas, were dotted over the landscape, but only clusters of miserable hovels, built of the local stone or of wattled clay. Wild nature alone was beautiful. Gorse, and ferns, and thorn-bushes abounded,—

“And in the meadow trenches bloom the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
The wild marsh marigold shines like fire in swamps and meadows gay.”

The flora of the Cornbrash and Great Oolite soils were especially varied. Conspicuous here, with its wrinkled leaves, and large purple flowers, was the meadow sage or clary (*salvia pratensis*), growing from half-a-foot to more than two feet in height, which is a very rare plant in England, occurring only in dry meadows and hedge-banks, but which may still be found in many places by the side of the road between Middleton and Ardley; while on spots of a different character, in bogs and wet places, like the banks of the Crowell at Cottisford, were to be seen the pretty cream-coloured blossoms of the plant, which, though it has no pretensions to the name of grass, has, from its beauty probably, been named “Grass of Parnassus,” and which, though common still in the north of England, is seldom found in the midland and southern counties.

WEST SAXON KINGDOM.

Before the close of the sixth century, the kingdom of the West Saxons had risen to a high place among the English kingdoms. Step by step from a small settlement on the Hampshire coast they had won their way, until, at the time mentioned, they held all the country now included in the counties of Dorset, Wilts, Hampshire, Berks, part of Somerset, Oxford, Buckingham, Gloucester, and Worcester, and stretching beyond them along the valley of the Severn. Thus this district lay just within the north-east boundary of their kingdom, the river Cherwell and the great forest-land of Burnwood separating it here from the dominion of the Middle Angles or Mercians.

THIS DISTRICT CONQUERED BY MERCIA.

When the kings of the Mercians began, in the seventh century, their contests for the extension of their dominion, and for lordship over the West Saxons, this district became necessarily

^{*} It is a strange error followed by Kemble (*Cod. Diplom. Anglo-Saxon.*, iii. p. xl.), that in Anglo-Saxon times the permanent enclosure of fields by hedges was as common in England as it is at the present time.

[†] Anglo-Saxon official records bear testimony to this constant and repeated work of fencing. Domesday constantly refers to forests used especially for this purpose, shewing that the fences in use were often dead fences.

Some half-century ago or less, the custom of enclosing the fields periodically existed in some few places in England, e.g. at Nottingham, where, on each Aug. 12, the inhabitants of the town issued out to the common pasture-land, and then threw down the hedges and destroyed the gates, which, at the beginning of seed-time, were again set up by the landlords. See Mr. Nasse's book before mentioned.

the scene of many encounters between the rival kingdoms; and as the boundaries of the two kingdoms were constantly changed, just as one or the other proved the stronger power, it was for some time alternately subjected to each. Thus we may conjecture that Penda (627—55), and Æthelred in 676, attached it to the Mercian kingdom, when they took from the West Saxons all the country north of the Thames, and that it so remained until Cuthred, king of the West Saxons, recovered it at the battle of Burford in A.D. 752, but no sufficient data exist to determine accurately these points. We are safest in the statement that this district continued, except for short intervals, part of the kingdom of the West Saxons, until, at the battle of Bensington in A.D. 778, Offa, the great king of the Mercians, conquered it, and then permanently attached it to the Mercian kingdom.

RECONQUERED BY THE WEST SAXONS.

King Offa died in A.D. 796. In A.D. 823, Ecgberht, king of Wessex, conquered Beornwulf, the usurper of the throne of Mercia, and then added Mercia to his kingdom. Thus this district became a second time attached to the kingdom of the West Saxons, but it was at the time when that one had absorbed all the other English sovereignties, and had formed that united kingdom, which was henceforth to be known as England.

THE HUNDREDS.

The early English settlers were adult freemen, either Eorls or Ceorls, the gentle or simple of their race, the Esquires and Yeomen of modern times, having under them a number of inferiors in a state of slavery. Each held the land which he had by force appropriated, or which had been assigned to him by common consent as his own absolute possession, free of any superior, and subject only to such burdens as were in course of time imposed by the community of which he became a member. The freemen, thus entirely independent, soon found themselves under a necessity of forming some kind of federation among themselves. Dwelling in a country whose native population were long hostile to them, and subject to the Danish invasions, they were obliged to take measures for the defence of their persons and property; and, as their settlements increased, for the good government of their common interests. Accordingly, communities were formed, probably during those intervals of peace which Ælfred's reign afforded (880—893), for these purposes. The first and simplest division of land had been the *mark*, that plot on which a greater or lesser number of freemen had settled for the purposes of cultivation, and of mutual profit and protection. These *marks* were now gathered or grouped into what are now called Unions, the first consisting of 10, called Tithings, and these again into larger ones, consisting of 100, called Hundreds. The *marks* or villages of this district were thus gathered into three or four separate Hundreds.

It is impossible to say what these Hundreds were, for the Domesday Survey, which is the earliest account of the Hundreds of the country generally, does not give those of Oxfordshire*. Some of the villages only of this district are there classed: Lillingston in the Half-Hundred of *Besenton*, *Norbroc* in *Primo Gadre*, and *Stoches* in *Secundo Gadre** Hundreds; while *Finnmere*, *Scildeswell*, and *Eyforde* (perhaps one of the Heyfords), are reckoned under the heading of

* The Oxfordshire villages are not classed under Hundreds, as in most counties. Where the name of a Hundred is given it only refers to the one place above which it is written.

* The meaning of the name *Gadre*, and even the lan-

guage to which it belongs, is very difficult of conjecture. There is "Gartree" Hundred in another county, and there is the Anglo-Saxon word *gaderian*, 'to gather.' But the word which the compilers of the Domesday converted into *gadre* may have been something very different.

Sudtone^b (Sutton) Hundred in Northamptonshire, and *Kaferfeld* under that of the Hundred of *Rovelai* in Buckinghamshire^c. It is probable also that Ambresdon, with its hamlets, and Merton were originally included in the Hundred of *Boledon* (Bullingdon), in which they long continued. Thus it is clear that the primary division of this district must have extended itself into several distinct Hundreds.

COUNTY OF OXON.

The Hundreds of the country were next grouped into shires^d (Anglo-Saxon *scyr*, a 'share or division'), and then the Hundreds of this district naturally fell to those with which they were chiefly connected. The uninhabited country to the north and east prevented any extension of the shire in that direction, while the Roman roads running south and west afforded easy communication with the settlements in those parts. This district was thus attached to the shire which took its name from a place situated at the confluence of the Isis and Cherwell rivers, then rapidly rising to importance, *Oxena-ford* or *Oxna-ford*. The village of Lillingston, in the forest beyond this district to the north, was also included within this shire as necessarily belonging to this rather than to any other local division. A boundary-stone, Anglo-Saxon *stan*, was then probably set up there, which led to the name of the place being changed from *Lillings* or *Lullings-ton*, to *Lilling-stan* or *Lillingestane*^e.

One place was exempted from this division. The noble Thane who possessed *Kafer-feld* (Caversfield) had other property in the neighbourhood beyond the limits of this district. Hence this was reckoned with his other possessions, being included in the adjoining county of Buckingham.

ECCLESIASTICAL DIVISIONS, PARISHES.

Nearly contemporaneous with these civil divisions was the organizing of the Church, effected by Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 668—690.

Theodorus, the first of the successors of Augustine who was acknowledged as the Metropolitan and Primate of England, made a general visitation of his province in 669, and returned from it to Canterbury determined upon two points,—to establish the parochial system, and to increase the episcopate^f. Up to this time the Church in England had been simply a large mission-field, but a plan had gradually arisen of localizing many of the clergy. From the migratory character of their courts, the princes were accustomed to select certain clergymen to accompany them for the performance of the services of the Church; and the Thanes soon after followed this example, and appointed their private chaplains. Theodorus determined to extend this system throughout

^b Six villages in Oxfordshire, *Finnmere*, *Fledha*, *Scildeswell*, *Glintone*, *Octone*, and *Eyforde*, are included under the heading of Sudtone Hundred. See Baker's "History of Northamptonshire."

^c This Hundred included:—

<i>Besentone</i>	now	Beachampton.
<i>Berton</i>	"	Barton Hartshorn.
<i>Cavrefelle</i>	"	Caversfield.
<i>Ceteode</i>	"	Chetwode.
<i>Hlesdone</i>	"	Hillesdon.
<i>Ledingberge</i>	"	Lenborough.
<i>Prestone</i>	"	Preston Bissett.
<i>Tedinwiche</i>	"	Tingewick.

^d "The shire must not be looked on as a division of the kingdom, or the mark as a division of the shire. The shire is in truth formed by an aggregation of marks, and the kingdom is formed by an aggregation of shires." *Freeman's Norman Conquest*, vol. i. chap. iii.

^e This is the name as given in Domesday, "*Lillingestan-Comitatus Oxenefordsc; Wapent. Dimid. Besenton.*"

Dr. Plot (*Nat. Hist.*, chap. vi. § 85) forgot his chronology when he suggested that "Lillingstone was accounted in Oxon for the sake of the Lords Lovels, whose inheritance, from the addition, we may conclude it once was, &c."

^f Hook's "*Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury*," vol. i. chap. iv.

the country. He therefore urged the great landed proprietors to place a church in the centre of their estates, and to assign to their former chaplains an independent position as pastors of the serfs, as well as of the inmates of the castle.

The residence of a settled clergyman made the place of his residence a "parish," i.e. the 'priest's *scyr* or shire,' the sphere of labour especially assigned to him.

DEANERIES.

A necessity next arose of uniting parishes in some order; and this was done by forming groups of ten, called, therefore, *Decennaries* or 'Deaneries.' The churches of this district were accordingly grouped under four Deaneries. The Deanery of *Codesdon* (Cuddesdon) embraced the long tract of moor and wooded-land on the east side of this district; and, being thinly populated, it reached far enough in this direction to include the churches of *Ambresdon* and *Mereton*. The other thirty churches were distributed between the three Deaneries, which took their names from their chief churches, *Burncestre*, *Kirklington*, and *Guislep* (Islip). There is no means of ascertaining in which of these Deaneries each church was placed; but the lines of the old Roman roads, still the highways of the districts, suggest that the order may have been as follows:—

<i>Burncestre.</i>	<i>Kirklington.</i>	<i>Guislep.</i>
Bicester.	Ardley.	Blechingdon.
Finmere.	Cottisford.	Bucknell.
Fringford.	Fritwell.	Chesterton.
Goddington.	Hardwick.	Charlton.
Launton.	Heyford, Upper.	Hampton.
Lillingston.	Heyford, Lower.	Islip.
Mixbury.	Kirtlington.	Middleton.
Newton.	Somerton.	Oddington.
Shelswell.	Stoke.	Weston.
Stratton.	Tusmore.	Wendlebury.

RURAL DEAN OF BURNCESTRE.

In the threefold order of the ministry, which has always distinguished the Church Catholic, there were, in the early organization of the Church, chiefs or leaders in each order, under the name of Archbishops, Archpriests, and Archdeacons. The Archpriests existed at first as subordinate Church officials without strict localization, and in the sixth century were of two kinds, 1. Cathedral or Urban, 2. Vicar or Rural; the Archpriest Urban being, both in point of time and dignity, prior to the Archpriest Rural, because the clergy and churches of the rural districts were of later origin than those of the city or town. But when about the end of the eighth century each diocese was divided into *Decennaries* or Deaneries, a corresponding change was made in the position of the Archpriests. They were then placed over the Deaneries, and for this reason received the new title of "Deans," and because they received their appointment direct from the Bishop, "Deans of the Bishop's." The object of their appointment seems to have been chiefly to assist the bishop in the administration of his diocese: 1. by inspecting the lives and manners of the clergy and people within their deaneries, and reporting thereon

* See Dansey's *Horæ Decanice Rurales*, published by Messrs. Rivington, 1844; also a paper on "The Office of the Rural Dean and Chapter," by Rev. T. B. Harvey, Rector of Cheddington, Bucks, 1873.

to the bishop; and 2. by making known and executing the bishop's orders among the clergy and their flocks. That they might the better discharge these duties the Deans were authorized to summon meetings, called *Chapters*¹, of the beneficed clergy of their deaneries, and of curates attending as proxies for their incumbents. These Chapters were held at first every three weeks, but afterwards once a-month, and in any parish in the deanery which the dean selected. They filled an important place in the machinery of the Church, as Courts of Christianity subordinate to the Court Christian of the Bishop.

By degrees, and especially in country districts, the deans became possessed of certain judicial power, having often committed to them, by special delegation, the probate of wills; the granting administration of the goods of persons dying intestate; the custody of vacant benefices; and sometimes the decision of testamentary and matrimonial causes, and matters of divorce¹. For this reason they had seals of office.

The seal of the Rural Dean of *Burncestre* is said to have been found among the ruins of Allchester, and is described as containing "the figure of a pelican standing on a font, or other pedestal, opening her breast with her bill, and feeding a brood of young ones with her blood; the form being oblong oval; and round the margin, near the extremity, the inscription, S. DECANI BERENCESTRIE²."

THE DANES.

The Danish invasions of England in the ninth and tenth centuries only slightly affected this district. They were for three distinct purposes: 1. plunder; 2. settlement; 3. conquest¹.

During the first of them, A.D. 787—855, the Danes may have entered Oxfordshire about the year A.D. 851, but they certainly did not reach this district. During the second, A.D. 855—897, they came very near it, forming settlements at Aynhoe, Farthinghoe, and other places in Northamptonshire². These unfriendly settlements in such close proximity soon roused the inhabitants of this district to take measures for their defence. For this purpose they formed a number of entrenched camps facing the Danish position. At Padbury and Buckingham, and on a spot west of these (Westbury), they raised a *burh* or *buruh*, a 'bury or fortified place,' and then crossing the Ouse they continued the same from that river to the Cherwell, at four distinct spots, *Meoxberie*, *Ardulveslie*, *Middleton*, and *Northbrook*³, thus presenting a long and continuous line of military earthworks through the north-west part of this district. These works were formed according to the usual method of the English, by throwing the contents of a large ditch inwards as a rampart, upon the ridge of which a palisade of timber was placed. The spots chosen were such as commanded a considerable extent of view. In the tenth century the Danes began for the third time a system of attacks. In A.D. 921 they attacked Towcester,

¹ Because the Dean was the head (*caput*) of such meetings.

² See Sir R. Phillimore's "Ecclesiastical Law."

³ See Kennett's *Par. Ant.* It is difficult to understand how this seal could have found its way to the site of the old Roman station, then long disused.

¹ Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. i. chap. ii.

² The Danish settlements in this country were chiefly to the north and east of the great *Watling Street*, the Roman road which ran from Dover to Chester. On the borders of the *Watling Street* we find the Danish ter-

minations *hoe* or *oe*, a 'hill' (*Ivinghoe*, *Totternhoe*, *Farthingoe*, &c.); *bye*, a 'village' (*Whitby*, *Rugby*, *Naseby*, &c.); and *thorp*, meaning also a village.

³ Castles were afterwards built upon the site of these camps at Mixbury, Ardley, and Middleton. The site of the camp near Northbrook is designated by the spot marked on the Ordnance Map as "Coal or Borough Cottage;" coal being probably a corruption of cold, and borough implying that some earthwork or walled enclosure stood near it.

in Northamptonshire, which King Edward had lately fortified as a further defence against their invasion of this part of the country, and having been repulsed before that town, they made a sudden dash upon *Ægeles-burh* (the Church-burgh, now Aylesbury)^o. On this occasion, it is said, they plundered the villages, drove away the cattle, and killed many of the inhabitants between that town and Burnwood. It is probable that then for the first time they set foot within this district, which lay only a short distance aside of their direct line of march. Two Danish spurs were found at Ambrosden^p two centuries ago, and it is very probable that these were dropped by the invaders, as they halted on the old encampment there, before they plunged into the thicket of the great forest, which lay in the way of their march on *Ægeles-burh*. But the absence of similar traces in every other part of this district seems to shew that they made no stay, nor gained any settlement within it.

Dr. Plot, and following him, Bp. Kennett, have put together a deal of purely imaginary matter about the violence committed by the Danes in their supposed invasions of this district. Both these writers have endeavoured to shew that the famous battle of Merton, fought in A.D. 871, between Æthelred and his brother Ælfred and the Danes, was fought in this neighbourhood^q; and the latter has further hazarded the conjecture, that the villages of *Fulewelle*, *Shelswell*, *Willarston*, *Bainton*, *Saxenton*, and *Burncestre*, were all destroyed by the Danes in their third and last invasion^r. But facts are stubborn obstacles to such building up of local history.

Though this district suffered less than many other parts of the country from the ravages of the Danes, its inhabitants were subsequently obliged to bear their share in the tax which was imposed by King Æthelred II., for the purpose of purchasing peace with their old enemies. The *Danegeld*, the first direct and annual tax laid upon the English nation, was exacted from them, amounting to twelve pence per annum upon each hide of land for all classes, except the clergy^s.

^o A.-S. Chron., A.D. 921. Then again very soon after that . . . they took no small number as well of men as of cattle between Burne-wood and Aylesbury [*betweox Bupne puba anb Æglebyrig.*]

^p "That the Danes had somewhat to do hereabouts is further evinced from one of the spurs in the hands (if I misremember not) of George Sherman, of the town of Bisseter, not far from this place, which I took no care to get engraven, because already done by Olaus Wormius, where the reader may see the exact figure of it."—*Plot's Nat. Hist.*, chap. x. § 77.

"There was another of these Danish spurs found upon digging the foundation of a garden wall belonging to the seat of Sir William Glynné, Baronet, An. 1674."—*Kennett's P. A.*, chap. viii.

^q The battle of Merton was fought in Wessex, not Mercia. From the date given in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle (which is the only account we have, for Florence of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, and others all copy the Chronicle in substance, and seem to have had no other source of information), it is clear that the West Saxons had the battles of Reading, Englefield, and Ashdown (fought within ten days) to themselves, at the close of January, 871. The fight for Ashdown was the fight for the Berk-

shire downs, which commanded both North and South Berkshire. After their defeat, those of the Danish army who escaped seem to have gone southwards, and the next battle was at Basing. Again, it is clear that at the battle of Merton the Bishop of Sherburn died, fighting in it, and it is not likely that he would be fighting on the Mercian side of the Thames. It appears, indeed, that a year or two previously Æthelred I. and the West Saxons had come into Mercia to help the Mercians to withstand the rising tide of Danes, but that, having been on that occasion betrayed, they would have nothing more to do with them, so that the Mercians had to fight the Danes alone afterwards. Every probability, therefore, is against the Oxfordshire Merton, and is in favour of Merton in Surrey, as being the scene of this great battle.

^r Most of these places were in Bishop Kennett's time, as they are now, single houses. The Danes then suggested themselves to his mind, and to Camden and others, as the possible destroyers of other houses, but without a shadow of authority for such an idea.

^s A.D. 1011. Among the counties that upon conquest and composition paid a constant tribute to the Danes, Oxfordshire is reckoned. See *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, sub. h. an^o.

ANGLO-SAXON CHURCHES.

The first parish churches built by the English were constructed of wood, that being the most abundant and most easily accessible material; but when, in a later age, the use of local stone prevailed, more substantial buildings were erected. There is still existing evidence to tell of four Saxon stone churches in this district.

On the north side of the nave of the present church of Bicester there is a small straight-sided arch formed by two stones placed obliquely against each other, the impost and edges of which are chamfered, which partakes of the supposed Saxon character, and presents the first rude development of the pointed arch.

The basement-storey of the present tower of Caversfield church is original work, and was the only part of this tower which was found not to need rebuilding in 1874. On its north and south sides there are two small windows, widely splayed both on the outside and inside, with a very small opening in the middle of a very thick wall, which are also of the character supposed to be Saxon[†].

At the recent restoration of the chancel of Kirtlington church in 1877, the foundations of a small semicircular apse, abutting on the east end of the present tower, and about four feet distant from the tower-wall, were discovered. These evidently belonged to the church dedicated to St. Mary, which was built in the Saxon period. They were left exactly as they were found, and are still undisturbed under the floor of the present chancel.

A church was consecrated at *Haiforde* (Lower Heyford) during the episcopate of Wulfwig, Bishop of Dorchester, A.D. 1053—67. This appears from a deed of gift of the moiety of this church to the abbey of Eynsham, by Peter de la Mare (date, thirteenth century), in which the old endowment of land is described *quæ fuerunt datæ in dedicatione Wulfwini, Episcopi de Dorcestria*[‡]. But no traces of this original church now remain.

That these early English churches were unendowed is almost certain, from no mention being made of them in Domesday. The precept which directed the taking of that survey, laid no injunction on the jurors to make a return of parish churches; and, though some are mentioned (rather more than 1,700 in all), it is clear that they are only those which possessed property in houses or land. An unendowed church would in no way affect the object of the survey, and therefore all such are passed over in the record of it[‡].

MEETING OF THE WITENAGEMOT.

Each mark, each shire, each kingdom, had its assembly or *gemót*, in which every freeman had a right of attending and a voice,—the origin of the parish vestry, the county-court, and the Parliament. The attendance of the freemen at the *gemót* of the shire and kingdom became gradually more and more difficult; and the larger the assembly the smaller became the importance of each individual attending. Thus the assembly of each kingdom came to be little more than the meeting of the leading men in Church and State,—Ealdormen, Bishops, and Thegns, under the presidency of their elected king, called therefore the *Witan*, the 'Wise Men.' When the other kingdoms of the country became merged in Wessex, their Witans also became merged in the Witan of that

[†] The window on the north side was for many years blocked up, but was re-opened in 1874.

[‡] Kennett's P. A., Anno MCCCCLXXX.

[‡] Thus, in Oxfordshire, no notice is taken of the church

of Dorchester, although, a short time before the taking of the survey, it had been the seat of a bishoprick.

[‡] Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. i. chap. iii.

kingdom, which then became the famous assembly of our forefathers called the *Witenagemót*, or 'Meeting of the Wise.' This *gemót* was the great Executive of those days, having the chief share in every branch of government, whether local or national. It was held from time to time in different places, and once within this district :—

"A.D. DCCCC LXXVII. Here was the great mote at *Kyrtlington*, after Easter (April 8th); and there died Bishop Sideman, by sudden death, on the IInd of the Kalends of May (April 30th). He was Bishop of Devonshire, and he desired that his body's resting-place might be at Crediton, and at his episcopal see. Then commanded King Eadweard and Archbishop Dunstan, that he should be conveyed to St. Mary's Monastery that is at Abingdon; and so it was also done; and he is also honorably buried on the north side in St. Paul's porch^a."

Nothing more is known of this council beyond the mention of it in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and this, no doubt, is due to the notoriety which it gained from the sudden death of one of the bishops attending it^a. Dr. Kennett has imagined this to have been a Church synod, convened by Archbishop Dunstan, to consider a grievance which had arisen within this district, and he was probably led to this fancy from the general tendency of that bishop's conciliar proceedings. But there is no authority for departing from the plain statement of the Chronicle, that this was one of the ordinary Witenagemots of the Saxons.

THE ENGLISH KINGS.

It is a story too long to tell here, how the original territory of the freemen in each village, the *mark*, gradually came to be folkland, the 'people's land;' how then folkland became bookland, individuals gaining private rights in what had been the common property of each separate community; and, further, how the early kings gradually absorbed many of these rights. It is enough to state, that in the course of the ninth century, either by the consent of the Witan, or by direct usurpation, the English kings became possessed of much property in this, as in other parts of the country. Ælfred, surnamed the Great, who began to reign in 871, and his three sons, long resided in Oxford, in a castle, as it is believed, with a keep (supposed to have been built by Offa, King of the Mercians), which stood on the site of what was afterwards known as Oxford Castle; and also in the Manor-house at Woodstock. He and his predecessors seem to have owned nearly all the villages bordering on Ottmoor, and some others adjoining, and to have held these in their own occupation, as the hereditary property of the crown^b. At the

^a Translation of Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls.

^a There has been some controversy about the place of this council. Florence of Worcester places it at *Kirtling*, in East Anglia; Hoveden follows him, changing the name of the place to *Kirding*, which by another writer is called *Kerling*; and they are followed by Sir Henry Spelman. But against this supposition it may be fairly argued, why, if the synod was held in the east of England, should Bishop Sideman have been buried at Abingdon? The history of the monastery of Abingdon copies the statement of the Saxon Chronicle:—

"DE SIDEMANNO EPISCOPO.

"A.D. 976. Anno tertio hujus regis concilio apud Kirtlingtun Paschali tempore constituto, Sidemannus, unus eorum, qui intererant, *Defnescire* episcopus, subitanea

arreptus ægritudine ibidem defungitur. Cujus corpus, jussu regis, ac Dunstani archiepiscopi, Abendonam defertur, et in porticu Sancti Pauli Apostoli illic decenter humatur."

Sir Henry Spelman records it as the only act of this synod that "leave was given to the country people to go in pilgrimage to the church of St. Mary at Abingdon;" but this is a mistake. The leave given at the synod was only to Bishop Sideman's servants to carry his body there instead of to Crediton.

Kennett's argument in favour of Kirtlington in this county, in preference to any other place as the scene of this synod, seems sound.—*Par. Ant.*, p. 44.

^b E.g. King Ælfred, by his will, bequeathed Beckley, which he describes as his hereditary property, together with some other villages, to Osferth, his kinsman.

end of the tenth century the kings became yet more closely connected with this district and its neighbourhood.

ÆTHELRED II.

Æthelred, the Unready, without rede or counsel, had a house of residence at *Hedendon** (Headington), and another at *Githslepe* (the 'leap of Githa,' now Islip), between which places an old Roman road afforded easy communication^d. To the latter he brought his second wife, Emma, the sister of Richard II., Duke of Normandy, after his marriage with her in A.D. 1002; and within it, two years later, was born the eldest of her sons, Eadward, who lived to be at once king and saint. A portion of the walls of this house, five or six feet in thickness, remained till the beginning of the present century^e, and shewed that this new palace, built of stone, was something better than the thatched huts which had hitherto served as residences for our kings. In 1009, King Æthelred kept the greatest part of his residence in Oxfordshire, at *Hedendon* and *Githslepe*.

EADWARD, KING AND CONFESSOR.

During the period of the Danish rule (A.D. 1017—41) the house at *Githslepe* was deserted; but when Eadward, forty years old, was elected king, and after some delay had received the crown in A.D. 1043, he returned to the home of his childhood. Here he spent a large part of his after life, paying occasional visits to his rude palaces at Windsor, and in the goat or oat meadow, Havering^f in Essex; and here he was able to enjoy to the full his favourite pastime of hunting. For this latter purpose he built a house in the centre of Burnewood, at *Brehull* (Brill). The metrical history of his life describes the building of this house, and an incident connected with it^g:—

“At *Brehull* the king caused
A royal palace to be made,
Chambers, stories, as is there befitting;
His bailiffs pay attention to the work.
Masons he had there, and carpenters
Labouring in their office.

* “From King Edward the Confessor's being born at Islip, 'tis easie to collect that his father, King Æthelred, must necessarily have had a royal seat there, as in all probability likewise at *Heddington*, near Oxford; for though tradition now goes that it was but the nursery of the king's children, whereof there remain yet upon the place some signs of foundations in a field near the town, called Court-close, yet it is plain that King Æthelred did sometimes at least reside there himself; for he concludes a charter, or some such-like instrument, wherein he grants privileges to the monastery of St. Frideswide here in Oxon, of his own restoration, in English thus, ‘This privilege was idith at *Hedinton*, &c.’”—*Plot's Nat. Hist.*, chap. x. § 128.

Corn for the royal household was ground at “King's Mill,” near Magdalen College-walks.

^d A road led from the Roman station at Islip to join the *Dorocina* and *Lactodorum* road at Headington. A small portion of this road still exists in the fields between the present Islip road and Headington; but here it comes to

an abrupt ending. Some Roman remains have recently been discovered at Headington, and these may assist in indicating the line of this road. See “Archæological Journal,” vol. v.

* “On the site of a small inn, known by the sign of the Red Lion, near the middle of the town, anciently stood the palace of King Ethelred; and a portion of its front walls, five or six feet in thickness, remained till within the last few years.”—*Dunkin's History of Islip in that of the Hundreds of Bullington and Ploughley*, vol. i.

The Feathers Inn, a posting-house in the last century on the great London and Worcester road, but now pulled down, was said to have been built out of the materials of the royal palace.

^f Morant derives the name Havering from *hæfer*, Anglo-Saxon, a ‘goat,’ and *ing*, a ‘meadow;’ but it is equally probable that it comes from *havre*, the Danish word for ‘oats.’

^g This, written in Norman French, was published by the Record Commission in 1858, and was translated by the editor, Mr. Luard.

They take such material, as pleases them ;
 In the forest, which is near.
 The carpenters, who were cutting the wood,
 Slept when they were tired :
 There is no one who goes not to repose.
 It was summer, and the heat was great ;
 At mid-day each goes to lie under a tree."

Then there follows, in the same strain, an account of a youth named Vulsi, being struck with blindness, when he had fallen asleep under a tree, and of his sight being twenty years afterwards restored to him by a supposed miracle of the saintly king^b.

Not seldom, during King Eadward's residence in this neighbourhood, did its inhabitants enjoy the honour of a royal visit, as he came riding by their villages, a huntsman of quaint appearance, cheering on his hounds ; and to him we may doubtless assign the first place in that long list of masters of hounds, who since his day must have often followed in his steps, and who have made this district famous in the annals of field sports.

When king Eadward determined to found a monastery and build a church (in place of "the wooden-wattled Church of St. Peter") at Westminster, he appropriated to this purpose a tenth part of his estate ; and among the possessions which he then made over to Westminster were the villages of Islip and Launton. His deed of gift of the first of these is especially noteworthy, as placing beyond all doubt the fact of his birth at Islip :—

Translation of the Original Saxon Charters¹.

"Edward, king, greeteth Wlfy^b, bishop, and Gyrth, earl, and all my nobles in Oxfordshire. And I tell you that I have given to Christ and St. Peter at Westminster, that small village wherein I was born, by name *Githslepe*, and one hide at *Mersæ*, scot-free, and rent-free, with all the things which belong thereunto, in wood and field, in meadows and waters, with the church, and with the immunities of the church, as fully and as largely and as free as it stood in mine own hand ; and also as my mother Imme, upon my right of primogeniture, for my maintenance gave it me entire, and bequeathed it to the family."

No memorial now remains of the pious king in his birthplace. A font (now placed in Middleton church) was long noted as that in which he is said to have been baptized ; but, unfortunately for the credit of this tradition, its unmistakeable character precludes the supposition of its being of an earlier date than the fourteenth century.

^b William of Malmesbury tells the story thus : "That one Wulvin, surnamed Spillicora (it should be De Spillicote), son of Wulmar de Nutegarshall (properly Lutegarshale, now Ludgershall), cutting down fuel in the wood, *Bruelle* (now Brill), after hard labouring, fell into a sleep ; and by a settlement of blood in his eyes, lost his sight for seventeen years ; and then, upon the strength of a dream, he went round to eighty-seven churches to beg relief from the respective saints ; and at last came blind to the king's court at Windsor, and was cured by a touch of the king's hand. After which he was keeper of the king's palace at Windsor, for several years after the death of his royal

healer. Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, recounts this among the other miracles of Edward the Confessor, and varies but little in the circumstances of it."—*Kennett's P. A.*, chap. ix.

¹ Sir W. Dugdale does not mention this charter in his *Monasticon* ; but the Saxon copy of the greatest part of it was discovered by Dr. Kennett, and is published in his "Parochial Antiquities," chap. ix.

It is in *MS. Cott. Faust. A. III.*, and is of the thirteenth century, and is evidently copied from a much older original.

^b Wulfwig, Bishop of Dorchester, consecrated in 1053.

STATE OF THIS DISTRICT IN KING EADWARD'S REIGN.

The twenty-four years of King Eadward's reign (A.D. 1042—66) were a period of unwonted peace; and we get then, for the first time, documentary evidence of the state of the whole country, and of its several parts. Hence we gather the following particulars about the land of this district: that the arable part then amounted to 267 carucates; the common pasture to 232½ hides; the woodland to 2,165 acres; and the meadow-land (reserved for hay) to 1,184½ acres¹. Taking now the average number of 96 acres as the measure of the carucate and hide^m, it appears that before, and in the eleventh century, the quantities were as follows:—

	Acres.
Arable-land	25,632
Common pasture	22,320
Woodland	2,165
Meadow-land	1,184½
	<hr/> 51,301½ ⁿ <hr/>

LANDOWNERS.

From the same source we know the names of the chief landholders of this district in King Eadward's reign. The first of these was an Englishman of high rank, Wigod, who, because he resided at Wallingford in Berkshire, was known as Wigod de Wallingford. He was, by courtesy or blood, a relation of the king's, and held office at court as his cup-bearer. Being high in royal favour, he was able to obtain grants of much property in this district, whereby he owned *Burncestre*, *Wreckwic*, *Chesterton*, *Weston*, *Kirklington*, *Northbrook*, *Haiforde*, *Bentone*, *Bukenhulle*, *Herdwick*, *Stoke*, *Meoxbury*, *Fulwell*, and *Stratton*, which villages having been bestowed upon one whom the king delighted to honour, were henceforth said to belong to "The Honour of Wallingford."

Azor held *Lillingestan*.

Asgar held *Wandesberie*.

Ælveva held *Ambresdone*.

Besi held *Hegford*.

Brictric held a hide in *Sumertone*.

Hacon held *Meretone* and *Petintone*.

Ketel held a hide in *Sumertone*.

Turi held *Mideltone*.

Siuard and Siuate held *Godendone*.

Tostig, one of the sons of Godwin, the great Earl of the West Saxons, held *Kaferfeld*.

Abingdon Abbey held land in *Ernecote*.

The king held *Langeton* in his own hands until he gave it to Westminster Abbey.

Of these chief landowners little can be said with certainty. There is mention in Domesday of "Azor, the son of Tored, a thane of King Edward's," who held the manor of *Bechesdone*

¹ The ploughed land in Domesday is measured by carucates; the common pasture by hides; the woodland by quarentines (a quarentine, i.e. a furlong, being a measure of 40 perches, the perch being reckoned at 20 ft.); and the meadow-land by acres.

^m A fair sized volume might certainly be written to discuss the measure of the carucate and hide. Only one thing appears clear, that the *hide* = *carucate* = *alod* = *ædel* = *alyth* = *sors*, was a variable amount, in which, at least, quality as well as quantity was taken into account. In the time of Richard I., a carucate generally measured 60 acres; but in 23 Edward III. a carucate in Burcester

contained 112 acres, and two carucates in Middleton contained 300 acres. A hide was generally computed at 96 acres (containing four virgates); but a hide at Chesterton in 13 Henry II. contained only 64 acres. Amid these varieties we can only take an average number, something between the two extremes; and if we take the common computation of 96 acres as the measure, we shall probably not go far amiss.

ⁿ The present estimated extent of the area included in these figures is 52,083 a. or. 8½ p. Cottesford, Hethe, and Souldern, are not included in these calculations, these villages not being mentioned in Domesday.

(Bidlesden), and other manors in Bucks.; and of Azor^o, the sewer of King Edward, who held land in Berks. Ælveva or Ælfgifa, is one of the commonest English names in Domesday, though the wife of Ælfgar the Earl, and the sister of Earl Harold, also bore it. Brictric is mentioned as "a vassal of Queen Eddid's," holding the manor of *Votesdone* (Waddesdon); and he may have been the son of Ælfgar (not the earl), the subject of the Matilda story, or a different person altogether. But Hacon and Ketel are manifest Danes, and so probably was Turi (or Thored). Hacon or Hakon was probably the person of that name, who was King Cnut's nephew, son of Eric, the Danish Earl of Northumberland, who was banished from England in 1029, and died at sea, or, according to another account, was killed in Orkney in the next year^p. The mention of these Danish landholders is noticeable in a shire which lay outside of the *Denalagu*, the district where the Danes were settled, and where the Danish law was in force.

The names of the smaller proprietors have not been recorded. *Ardley*, *Finnere*, *Newton*, and *Tusmore*, were very small estates; and each of the villages of *Feringford*, *Fritwell*, *Saxenton*, and *Shelswell*, were divided into two or more separate properties, the owners of all these being probably only persons of local position, and not of importance sufficient to have a place among the great landholders.

EARLDOM OF GYRTH.

In the first year of king Eadward's reign, Oxfordshire formed a part of the earldom of Swegen, the eldest son of Earl Godwin. This earldom was geographically most anomalous, taking in the Mercian shires of Hereford, Gloucester, and Oxford, as well as the West Saxon shires of Berkshire and Somerset^q. At the redistribution of the English earldoms in 1057-8, the position of this county was again unusual. It was first placed in the hands of Ælfgar, then made Earl of the Mercians; but at his second outlawry, or after his death, it was transferred to Gyrth, the fourth son of Earl Godwin, who had become Earl of the East Angles^r. Earl Gyrth's jurisdiction on his first appointment was narrower than had been attached to that title when it was held by Harold, and probably narrower than when it was held by Ælfgar. Harold had possessed with the two strictly Anglian shires, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Essex, probably including Middlesex. But of these Cambridgeshire only fell to the lot of Gyrth. Oxfordshire was certainly a subsequent addition. The policy of attaching detached shires to distant earldoms is not very clear, but we may probably see a reason in this instance, either in the substitution of this county for the two which had been separated from the East Anglian earldom, or in the effort to spread the influence of the house of Godwin in this frontier district.

EARLY NORMAN PERIOD.

Such was the state in which the Norman Conquest found this district. After Duke William turned aside from the city of London, defended by its broad river and Roman walls, to pursue his march of conquest through the land, he kept to the right bank of the Thames, harrying as he went through Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire, till he reached Wallingford. We might have expected to hear of some effort in this neighbourhood to stop the Conqueror's advance. Harold had summoned to his side for their country's defence as many of his subjects as would join the muster of his troops, but no names have been recorded among these of persons from this district, neither is Oxfordshire mentioned among the shires from which he gathered his

^q Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv. chap. xvii.

^r Ibid., vol. i. chap. vi.

^s Ibid., vol. ii. chap. vii.

^t Ibid., vol. ii. chap. ix., and Appendix G. p. 566.

forces*. Some few individuals may have obeyed the call, but there is no doubt that this part of the country, lying outside the line of Harold's southward march, and being only a detached dependancy of the earldom of Gyrth, was scarcely disturbed at all in this great crisis of England's history. Wigod, resident at Wallingford, at once made his submission, and, after receiving and entertaining his new master, is said to have so far used his influence with his dependants and neighbours, that William was enabled to cross the Thames at Wallingford, where a bridge and a ford provided a safe transport for his army, without any serious opposition. William was quite willing to leave unmolested all persons and places who yielded to his power, and therefore, having no occasion to enter this district, he passed beneath the hills on the north side of the Thames until he came to Berkampstead, where the messengers came to offer him the vacant crown of England.

THE CONQUEROR REGRANTS TO WIGOD HIS LAND.

Soon after his coronation on Christmas morning, 1066, King William set out in the following March on his first progress through the southern counties, which had submitted to him, his object being, without doubt, to visit and take possession of the forfeited lands. On this occasion he again came to Wallingford, to bestow his special favour upon the man who had so greatly assisted him before. Wigod had been longer-sighted than his neighbours, and had known better how to adapt himself to the new order of things; and now, as his reward, he received from the Conqueror a regrant of all his lands and other possessions. He seems to have had so much influence with the king that Englishmen of small account were glad to seek his protection; and he was honoured by the gift of his daughter in marriage to the king's great friend and adherent, Robert of Oily. But neither could his contemporaries, nor can we, feel any respect for a man, or for others like him, as Thurkill of Warwick and Eadward of Salisbury, who, traitor-like, stood aloof from their own race to win for themselves favour and riches by submissions which could not have been otherwise than unworthy†. The Conqueror does not appear to have done anything further on this occasion affecting this district. Wigod's position, though secured, was indeed changed and somewhat lowered, in that he now held what had before been his own as a personal gift from the reigning king, either purchased by a money payment, or as a free gift, while the other English landowners remained at peace, and held their lands as yet undisturbed.

GRANTS OF LAND TO NORMANS.

In March, 1067, King William visited Normandy, and on his return to England at the end of that year, began a wider and more violent confiscation of property throughout England than any he had before attempted. Then, it is said, "he gave away each man's land," and, in consequence of a heavy money import laid on the nation, "The king set mickle geld on the poor folk." Thereupon followed the transfer of every foot of land in this district to new owners. The lands of Hacon, Ketel, Turi, and the other great English possessors, were not treated as Wigod's had been, considered to be forfeited, and then given back to their former possessors on a new tenure, but they were at once seized and distributed by the Conqueror among his kinsmen, friends, and followers. The utter extinction of all the smaller estates at this time is also apparent in this district, as in all other parts of the country. Three freemen had possessed

* Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iii. chap. xv.

† Ibid., vol. v. chap. xxii. p. 51.

some land at *Ernecote*, but their separate properties were absorbed into one, to be assigned to an adherent of King William's.

This confiscation was not done in a moment, but it was carried on through several years, almost up to the end of William's reign; and so thoroughly was it done everywhere, as well as here, that eighteen years later, at the taking of the Great Survey, the men who had held the lands of England in the days of her freedom, had become mere historical persons, whose names were remembered, only because the extent of their lands and of their rights formed the measure of the rights of the strangers who stepped into their places ^u.

BISHOP ODO.

To his half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who had next to himself the greatest share in making the invasion of England successful, and to whom he gave 439 different estates situated in seventeen counties, the chief of all the spoil, King William made over the whole village of *Somerton*, and estates in *Feringford*, *Finemere*, *Fertwell*, *Saxenton*, and *Shelswell*.

THE COUNTESS JUDITH.

To his niece, the daughter of his half-sister Adeliza, and given in marriage to Waltheof, son and heir of Siuuard, the English Earl of Northumberland, he gave the villages of *Mercton* and *Petintone*.

EARL OF EVREUX.

To his cousin, Richard of Evreux, he gave an estate at *Shelswell*.

WILLIAM DE WARENE.

To William de Warene or Warren, who took his name from a fortress by the Northern Varenne, who was associated with Bishop Odo in the government of England, to whom he had given his daughter Gundreda in marriage, and upon whom he subsequently bestowed the earldom of Surrey, with estates in twelve counties, he gave *Cavrefelle*, *Acham* (Noke), and estates in *Fertwell*, *Certelintone*, and *Newton*.

GEOFFREY DE MANDEVILLE.

To another adherent, who took his name from *Mandeville* or *Magna Villa*, in Normandy, and whom he rewarded with a hundred and eighteen lordships in England, he gave *Wandesberic*.

WALTER GIFFARD.

Walter Giffard, a Norman Baron, had contributed thirty ships and a hundred knights towards the English expedition. He was rewarded with the earldom of Buckingham, and among the estates bestowed upon him were three virgates of land in each of the villages of *Stoches* and *Toresmere*.

EARL HUGH.

Hugh of Avranches (*de Abrincis*), in Normandy, had supplied sixty ships for the same purpose. He was created Earl of Chester with the gift of the whole country, and among other estates conveyed to him was the village of *Ardulveslie* in this district.

^u Freeman's "Norman's Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxii. p. 37.

OTHERS.

To Richard Puingiant the Conqueror gave the villages of *Mideltone* and *Godendon*.

To Robert de Statford, or Stadford, he gave two hides of land in *Norbroc*.

To William, son of Manne, he gave an estate in *Ernecote*.

The names of the two latter mark them as Englishmen; and we may suppose that as King William made his way in this country, these two men, like some others, had gone over to his side, and were not ashamed to receive from his hands the lands which of right belonged to their countrymen and neighbours.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY.

The estates belonging to ecclesiastical bodies were generally exempted from the forfeiture which was supposed to fall upon all others, but it is clear that they were not always so. Thus the Conqueror confirmed to the abbey of Westminster King Eadward's gift of two and a-half hides in *Langeton*, while he laid hands on the same king's gift to that house of *Githslepe* (Islip), to bestow it upon one of his favourites, Hugh de Grentmaisnel². To Abingdon abbey he confirmed King Æthelred's gift in *Ernecote*, but he took into his own possession the same king's gift of *Cherielintone* (Charlton).

FIRST NORMAN BISHOP IN ENGLAND.

Thus all the land of this district was transferred to new owners, and not the land only. In the same year in which King William began his great system of confiscation, he exercised also for the first time the power of bestowing an English bishoprick on one of his own countrymen. Remigius, almoner of the house of Fécamp, "a man of small stature, but of lofty soul," had fitted out a single ship with twenty knights, as his offering towards the fleet needed for the English expedition, and had come over with Duke William to England, and had been present at the battle of Hastings. On the death of Wulfwig, Bishop of Dorchester, in 1067, he was presented to that vacant see, the greatest in extent of territorial jurisdiction among the bishopricks of England. Soon after his consecration, he returned with King William to celebrate his triumph through his Norman dominions, and to witness in his own abbey at Fécamp the great display there made of the treasures which had been gathered from England³; but he soon afterwards came to reside at Dorchester, in a district where Wigod on one side and Robert of Oily on the other were ready to give him all needful help⁴. There, we are told, he planned and began great works, which were left unfinished when, ten years later, the bishoprick was removed.

THE HEIRS OF WIGOD.

Wigod of Wallingford died in the interval between A.D. 1067 and the taking of the Domesday Survey. His only son, Tokig, had died by King William's side under the walls of Gerberoi, in Normandy, in 1080, so that at his death his estates passed to his two sons-in-law, Robert of Oily, probably Ouilley-le-Vicomte, near Lisieux, who had married his eldest daughter Ealdgyth, and

² It was not until a century later that Westminster Abbey recovered its rights. The Islip manor descended to Jeffery of Ivery, and at his death it was granted to William de Curey. The latter died in 1173, when it again reverted to the crown. The abbot and convent of Westminster

then urged their claim to it, and ultimately succeeded in establishing it.

³ See the "Life of St. Hugh of Avalon, Bishop of Lincoln," by Rev. G. G. Perry, published by Murray, 1880.

⁴ Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv. c. xviii. 133.

Miles, or Milo, of Wallingford, surnamed Crispin, who had married his second daughter, Matilda or Maud^a.

ROBERT OF OILY.

It was King William's policy to keep the conquered land in check by establishing in every large place a stronghold, which should be held by those who were friendly to his cause. The town of Oxford had stood out when much of the country had submitted to him. The date of its submission is very doubtful^b, but there seems some reason for supposing that in 1068, when King William began his first northern campaign, he attacked and took it by storm, committing such devastation that eighteen years afterwards 478 houses remained in so ruinous a state as to be unable to pay taxes, leaving only 243 still taxable. He then committed it to his chief friend in these parts, Robert of Oily, directing him at once to secure his conquest by the building of a castle there. This was done in the years 1071, 2, 3. One of the towers that surrounded the keep still stands to tell of days when Oxford, unknown as a seat of learning, was famous as a border fortress. Within his castle Robert built a chapel, which he dedicated to St. George, and which he liberally endowed. His gifts to this chapel included much of his property in this district, and consisted of the churches of *Weston* and *Cestreton*; two parts of the tithe of his demesne lands in *Burncestre*, *Wrechwike*, *Weston*, *Blechesdon*, *Bukenhull*, *Northbroc juxta Somerton*; two parts of all the tithe of *Bechele*; the whole tithes of *Acle*, *Horton*, and *Mercote*; half a hide of land in *Stodele*, belonging to *Bechele*; and two hides of land with wood and other appurtenances in *Ernicote*, in the parish of *Ambrosden*^c.

As Constable of Oxford Castle, and owner of much property both in the town and county, Robert of Oily was for many years the man of chief importance in this neighbourhood, and it was doubtless by his influence that the feeling of discontent, which could not fail to be felt in this as in other subdued districts, was kept in check, and prevented from breaking out into open rebellion against the Conqueror's usurpations and tyranny. He figures at great length in the local history of Abingdon; and of his good works in restoring many ruined churches within and without the walls of Oxford, there is little doubt that we have a specimen in the existing tower of St. Michael's in that city. He died in September, 1090 or 91, and was buried in the Minster Church of Abingdon, which he had helped to rebuild, with his wife, who had predeceased him. He left no male issue.

ROGER OF IVRY.

Robert of Oily had brought over to England his friend Roger of Ivry, son of Waleran, who held the town and castle of Ivry in Normandy, by the service of being the duke's cup-bearer, and had bound himself by a promise to give to his friend a share of any estates or other spoil

^a Genealogists do not agree as to his wife. See Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv., Appendix, note G.

^b Ibid., Appendix Z.

^c "In the first charter of R. de Oily, as now preserved in the Oseney Register, there is no mention of the particular places, but when they were all after converted and confirm'd to the abbey of Oseney, they are express in several successive charters."

It does not appear whether Robert of Oily gave this property before he had divided his possessions with his friend Roger of Ivry, or afterwards. It seems most likely that he

alone gave his gift, and that Roger, when he came to share Robert's possessions, confirmed it, for in the Oseney Registers they are both reputed as founders and benefactors of the chapel.

"An. Dom. Mil. Septuages. quarto fundata est Ecclesia S. Georgii in Castello Oxon a Roberto de Oleio primo et Rogero de Iveri tempore Reg. Willelmi Bastard, qui in dicta ecclesia Canonicos seculares instituerunt, et diversos redditus de duabus Baronis prædictis eisdem assignarunt de Ecclesiis terris," &c.—Kennett's *P. A.*, An. MLXXIII.

of which he might become possessed in this country^d. A part, therefore, of Robert of Oily's possessions in this district soon passed to his friend. This Roger of Ivry (whose name is still perpetuated in the parish of Iver in Bucks) married Adeline, eldest daughter of Hugh de Grantmaisnel, the Norman lord who had no small share in the conquest of England, and in the division of the spoil, to whom king William gave the villages of *Guislepe*, *Otendon*, and *Cherielintone*, with others in this neighbourhood. He died in 1079, leaving his widow and three sons, 1. Roger, 2. Hugh, 3. Jeffery, his heirs. His widow retained the property which had been her father's^e, while his two elder sons succeeded to that which had come of Robert of Oily's gift.

Wigod's property, therefore, was divided as follows:—

Robert of Oily held *Burncestre* with *Wrechwic*, *Buchehelle*, *Fulewelle*, *Hardewick*, *Bentone*, *Hai-forde*, *Stratone*, *Weston*, and two hides in *Certelintone*.

Roger of Ivry II. held *Misseberie*, *Stoches*, and one and a-half hides in *Norbroc*.

Hugh of Ivry held *Ambresdone*.

Miles Crispin held *Cestretone*. To him the king gave also, by special grant, *Hegford*, and two hides in *Somerton*.

THE GREAT SURVEY.

When King William had apportioned among his friends and adherents those districts of the country which had submitted to him, and because every new possessor, whether English or French, was supposed to hold his lands as a direct personal gift of the reigning king to himself, the Conqueror might well think it part of his duty to find out whether his will had been rightly carried out, and whether every landowner was in lawful possession of such estates as the royal favour had bestowed upon him. He might also well wish to ascertain what aid was forthcoming to him for the government of his new dominions; what taxes were already by right payable to him, and what additional ones might be imposed; and especially whether the recent *Hidegeld*, a tax of seventy-two pennies on every hide of land, imposed in 1083 or 84, had been duly paid or not^f. Accordingly, in 1085, the order was given for the great Survey of England, which has been called *Dome-boc*, corrupted into Domesday-book. The Commissioners for taking the survey in this district were the four who were sent into the midland counties: Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln, Walter Giffard, the then aged Earl of Buckingham, Henry of Ferrers, lord of Tutbury and Fifhide, and Adam, one of the sons of Hubert of Rye, and brother of the dapifer, Eudo of Colchester. They completed the survey of Oxfordshire in 1086, and from the particulars gathered by them we get an exact map and picture of this district at one of the great turning-points of its history.

From these we learn, 1. who were the owners and occupiers of land; 2. what was the quantity of each separate holding; and 3. what amount of change in the tenure and value of each estate had taken place in the forty years which had elapsed between King Eadward's reign and the taking of the Survey, in every village of this district except the six (*Cotesford*, *Finemere*, *Hethe*, *Langeton*, *Sulthorn*, and *Tusmore*) of which no account is given. The survey of this district presents nothing beyond the bare facts required to be ascertained. No incidental details; no glimpses of personal, family, or local history; no enumeration of cattle; no notice of ecclesiastical matters; no record of illegal occupations or of wrong doing of any kind, are mentioned within

^d Of the connection between Robert of Oily and Roger of Ivry, see Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv. Appendix, note G.

she had a house of residence at Fencot, in the parish of Charlton, is entirely without authority.

^f Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxii.

* The supposition of Kennett (P. A., Ano. MDCVIII.) that

it, as these are in the survey of many other parts of the kingdom. Either this district was so well-ordered and quiet that it had little to tell of itself, or the commissioners cared so little for anything beyond the necessary information, that dry statistics of names and numbers satisfied them. But though the survey thus lacks much which we might have wished to know, its information is abundant.

LOCAL EFFECTS OF THE CONQUEST ON LAND.

Already, in the Anglo-Saxon period, the original rights of the community in the land had been swallowed up and lost in the separate jurisdictions, which had gradually, but stealthily, been set up. The free peasant proprietors had long ago disappeared, and each landholder had become a lord of the soil instead of the head of a clan, and his separate estate a territorial lordship. King William found these lordships largely established in England; and the first change which his reign introduced was to give them a new name. Each lordship became henceforth designated a "Manor," a word of Norman origin (*manoir*), meaning a habitation or dwelling, because such was supposed to be granted for the home of the king's dependants.

These manors differed greatly in size. Their interior arrangement was very similar to that of the German manors, with regard to rights and husbandry relations. On each manor was the house of the lord, with a courtyard and garden. The arable land was reduced to two principal parts: 1. that which was held by the lord in his own occupation, called for that reason the "demesne;" 2. that which was assigned to tenants, including that freely given as the glebe of the parish priest. The demesne was cultivated by the labour of the tenants, and for this reason it always formed the smallest part of the manor. In 1086, the arable land of this district was divided as follows:—

	Carrucates.	Acres.
Demesne land	73½	= 7,056
Tenants' land	158½	= 15,216
Fallow land, or out of cultivation	42½	= 4,080
Land newly brought into cultivation . . .	7	= 672
	<hr/> 281½ <hr/>	<hr/> 27,024 <hr/>

These figures shew a slight increase of arable land beyond the estimated extent in King Eadward's reign. The common pasture probably remained unchanged. We may therefore conjecture that the wood-land had been reduced.

ON POPULATION.

The classes of the population occupying the land were the usual ones of that age, all, or nearly all, being Englishmen, distinct from their Norman lords. The first and most numerous class were the peasant serfs, who occupied the larger part of each manor (the portion held by each being generally fixed and equal in the same manor, originally, in most cases, a virgate), and who were bound to perform the chief agricultural works within it. They were called *villani*, or *villeins*, i.e. the inhabitants or cultivators of a "villa," a farm or village^s. They numbered in this district 338 at the taking of the survey.

^s Other meanings came to be attached to this word in later times. The villeins of the Domesday Survey stood in the place of the ceorls, or simple freemen, of the old

English times, but in a lower position. The exalting of a chief of a clan into a lord of the soil had a necessary tendency to depress the hitherto free occupiers of the soil.

The second class, both in rank and numbers, were the *cotarii*, the 'cottagers,' or *bordarii*, the 'borders^b,' whose names imply that they were possessors of a small house with a courtyard, and often a small plot of ground, sometimes called *cotland*, attached to it. This class had to perform certain labour services for their lord, but, on account of the insignificance of their possessions, of a far lighter kind than the *villani*. These numbered in this district 183.

The lowest class were the personal slaves, who were the mere chattels of their masters. These numbered only 61.

Hence we may calculate the probable amount of the adult male population of this district at the end of the eleventh century:—

Villeins . .	338
Bordmen . .	183
Slaves . .	61
	<hr/>
	582
Say, for the six parishes not mentioned in Domesday, of the three classes . .	70
	<hr/>
	652
	<hr/>

These figures, multiplied by 4, will give the probable amount of the general population at the same time:—

$$\begin{array}{r}
 582 \times 4 = 2,328 \\
 70 \times 4 = 280 \\
 \hline
 2,608 \\
 \hline
 \end{array}$$

Now the last census, 1871, gives the families or occupiers in the thirty-one parishes included in this calculation as 3,160, and the total population as 13,791. Comparing these numbers with those given in Domesday, we find that the population at the latter date was about five times less than it is at the present time. The proportion of land to persons was then consequently far larger than it is now. According to the last census, the proportion of acres to persons is now 1.64 throughout the whole country¹. In this agricultural district it is, of course, far higher, being about 3½ acres to each person^k. But in the eleventh century, if, taking round numbers, we put the population at 2,600, and the estimated extent at 52,000 acres, we find that the proportion was just 20 acres to every head of the population.

As soon as land was granted and held of a lord, certain stipulated services for his benefit came to be demanded of the tenants. And thus, some time before the Norman Conquest, the position of the ceorls had been lowered into that of dependants, holding their lands at the will of their lord, and giving him in return certain labour services. In the century following the Conquest, the villeins were still further degraded; for as, under the manorial system, everything tended to strengthen the hands of the lord, and to fix and stiffen his rights, the rights of his dependants decreased in exactly like proportion. See Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxiv.

^b The word *bord*, or *bordelium*, means a 'small house,' or a 'table.' We still have the word 'boarders,' for persons lodged and provisioned in a house. We have also a 'cup-board,' a 'side-board,' &c. The *Bordarii*, or 'Bordmen,' were so called because they held their land on condition of supplying board or food, such as eggs, poultry, and such like to their lords.

¹ England and Wales contain 37,324,683 acres, and according to the census of 1871, 22,704,106 people. The proportion of acres to persons, therefore, is 1.64.

^k Taking the population at 13,791, and the extent of land at 52,000 acres.

INCREASED VALUE OF LAND.

The value of land was estimated at this time, not on the actual number of acres, but on the land under cultivation in each village; and in the case of wood-land, not on its extent, but on the number of hogs it would maintain. The rapid advance in the value of some of the estates of this district in the short interval of forty years is therefore very significant. The midland counties generally, with the single exception of Bedfordshire, exhibited an increase more or less marked during this period, but this seldom exceeded 10 per cent. for church-lands, and a little over 6 per cent. for other lands. In some parts of this district, however, the increase advanced far beyond this rate¹, as, e.g., at *Ambresdon*, *Finnere*, *Hegford*, *Kirklington*, *Somerton*, *Stoke*, *Stratton*, *Shelswell*, and *Weston*; while, at the same time, in four manors, *Bucknell*, *Fulwell*, *Fertwell*, and *Piddington*, probably from some unknown local circumstances, the value had largely decreased.

Two manors situated on the river Cherwell yielded an income beyond their money value. Two fisheries at Lower Heyford were bound to supply to their owner 900 eels, and the mill at Somerton 400 eels, yearly. There was also a vivary, or fish-preserve, at Caversfield, but the value of it is not given.

NORMAN LORDS AND THEIR TENANTS.

Of the new Norman owners of its soil none came as yet to reside in this district. Robert of Oily kept high state in his castle at Oxford; Miles Crispin resided in Wallingford Castle; the Countess Judith, after the death of her husband in A.D. 1075, at Saltry in Huntingdonshire; while all the other proprietors were also absentees.

Of the new occupiers of the soil, the subfeudatory tenants of the great lords, few only could have been resident. Four of them, Wadard, Turolde, Rainald, and Gislebert, were Normans of some note.

The first two were military retainers of Bishop Odo^m. In the celebrated Bayeux tapestry, upon which the story of the Norman Conquest is worked by the needle, the figure of Wadard, bearing a pennon at the end of his lance, with the inscription, *Hic est Wadard*, occupies a prominent place among the troops, who are represented on their march to Hastings. He may have been thus distinguished as being a native of the town, for whose newly-rebuilt cathedral the famous picture was intended, if his valour had not entitled him to such a distinction. He received from the bishop the grant of his manors in this district, and of *Cogges*, *Dun's-Tew*, and portions of land in eight other manors in Oxfordshire, besides numerous other manors in other counties.

Turolde's name and figure appear also in the Bayeux tapestryⁿ, and he is thought by some to have been the designer of that "historical embroidery^o."

¹ Sir Robert Atkyns, in endeavouring to shew what proportion the value of money at the time of the Conquest bore to the value of it in his own time (1712 A.D.) says:—"The rate of necessities, which subsist human life, is the true estimate of money. Since, therefore, wheat-corn seems to be the most necessary of any one thing, we may best value money by the price of wheat in the several ages. A bushel of wheat, soon after the Conquest, was sold for a penny; and because their penny was equal in weight to our threepence, we may therefore allow their bushel of wheat to be worth 3d. At this day, a bushel of wheat, one year with another, may be valued at four shillings, which

is sixteen times the value of wheat six hundred years ago. The conclusion will be, that a man might fare in that time as well on 20s. a-year of our money as upon £16 per ann. at present." See Atkyns' "Gloucestershire."

At the present day the increase is far larger, and money of the time of the Conquest must be multiplied by 30 to give its present value.

^m Wadard is described in one entry in Domesday as *homo episcopi*.

ⁿ "The only persons on the Norman side who appear by name in the representation of the landing, and of the battle of Hastings, are Duke William and his two brothers, Count

Rainald, or Reginald, had been a monk of Jumieges, and a chaplain of King William's, and was, at the time of the Domesday Survey, Abbot of Abingdon, Berks. Besides four manors in this district, he held those of *Levecanole*, *Codesdone*, *Sawford*, *Bereford*, *Gersedune*, *Tademertone*, in Oxfordshire, and a large and rich portion of Berkshire¹.

Gislebert, or Gilbert, was probably the same as Gilbert de Amory, a Norman, whose name appears on the roll of Battle Abbey. Being a military vassal of Robert of Oily's, he received from his superior lord the grant of several of his manors. His descendants possessed Bletchington, Weston, and Bucknell manors for many generations.

The other occupiers, who are called in Domesday by their Christian names, were probably Englishmen, the old occupants of the soil, and resident within this district, who obtained from their new masters grants of the lands they had long possessed. One of these, Godric, who held *Guislepe* (Islip), and a hide of land in *Shelswell*, was certainly of English descent, as his name testifies. This name is so common in Domesday that it is vain to try to fix it; but it is not unlikely that the occupier of land in this district was a son or relation of Godric, one of the leading men in Berkshire, the Sheriff of that county, and of Buckinghamshire, who fell fighting for his country at Hastings².

The annexed table shews at a glance many of the particulars mentioned, as given in the great Survey.

OTHER NORMAN LANDOWNERS.

In the days following the Conquest, when England and Normandy formed the dominion of one common king and duke, the Norman conquerors and settlers took root on English soil, and learned to feel that England, and not Normandy, was their real home. It was during that time that other persons of Norman descent, besides those already mentioned, became possessed of property in this district.

1. Among the crowds of clergy which followed Duke William to England were two prelates of all but the highest rank in the Norman Church. One was Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and the other was Geoffrey of Mowbray, Bishop of Coutances. The latter had exhorted the Norman army in the camp at Hastings³, on the night before the battle, and had subsequently asked the assent of the crowds assembled in the West Minster to the crowning of their Duke. He was soon rewarded with lands and lordships in almost every part of England; and when Bishop Odo's manors were confiscated to the crown he succeeded to them. He died in 1093, when the same manors were bestowed on the Barons Arsic.

2. Richard de Humet, Constable of Normandy, and founder of the abbey of Aunay there in 1131, succeeded to the manor of *Kirklington* early in the twelfth century.

3. In the last years of William the Conqueror's reign, or in the first years of William Rufus, a valiant man named Simon of Senlis (afterwards called St. Liz), came into England, and married Matilda, a daughter of Waltheof, the murdered Earl of Northumberland, and by this marriage

Eustace of Boulogne, and Wadard, Vital, and Tuold, the three retainers of Bishop Odo. It is plain that, in the mind of the designer of the tapestry, the Bishop of Bayeux and his favourite followers came next after Duke William himself. This is the great argument for the tapestry being a contemporary work, and made for Bishop Odo and the church of Bayeux. As Dr. Lingard says, it is quite inconceivable that these persons, who are of no importance in the general history, whose reputation must have been

purely local, should have received such prominence in any but a purely local work."—*Freeman's Norman Conquest*, vol. iii., Appendix A.

¹ See Miss A. Strickland's "Lives of the Queens."

² See Dugdale's "Abingdon Monastery."

³ Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv., Appendix, note F.

⁴ Ibid., vol. iii. chaps. xv. and xvi.

had conveyed to him the earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon. Soon after their marriage, the Countess Judith, the widow of Waltheof, gave to her son-in-law her two manors of *Petintone* and *Mereton*.

4. Among the great houses of Normandy, one derived its name from the town of St. Walarie, or Valery, situated near the mouth of the broad estuary of the Somme, the port from which Duke William set sail for his expedition to England. In the catalogue of his followers there is mention of Seynt Walery; and in the French annals of Normandy, in the list of those who were at the conquest of England, is "Le Sire de S. Valery;" and among those who were alive after the battle is "R. de St. Valery," who is probably the same as "Ranulph de S. Walery," mentioned in Domesday as holding lands in Lincolnshire, and several houses in Winchester, on a spot called "*Vicus Sancti Walerici*." His son, or youngest brother, Guy de St. Walery, received from the king, Henry I., a grant of *Ambresdon* manor, after the death, without issue, of Jeffery de Ivery, about 1112, the successor of his brother Hugh, who owned it at the Domesday Survey.

5. Another Norman warrior who came to England was Bertram, whom the Conqueror made lord of Newbold Verdon, and Farnham Royal, in Leicestershire. His son, Norman de Verdon, married Lesceline, daughter of Lord Geoffrey de Clinton, Chamberlain and Treasurer to King Henry I., and obtained from the king a grant of that part of the heath-land in this district which is now comprised within the parish of *Hethe*.

6. The first known possessor of *Cotesford* was Alice de Diverylle. She was evidently of French or Norman extraction, and she soon bestowed all her property at *Cotesford* upon the abbey of Bec, in Normandy.

7. Robert Fitz-Gerold possessed at the General Survey nineteen lordships in Wiltshire and Hampshire, besides lands in other counties (living in 1082). His grandson, Warine Fitz-Gerold, Chamberlain and Treasurer to King Henry II., obtained a grant of *Hegford* (Upper Heyford) early in that king's reign.

8. Among Duke Robert's most faithful adherents in Normandy was Helias of Saint Saen[†], who had married one of his daughters. He was probably the person who came into possession of *Sulthorne* (Souldern).

9. In 1107, Gilbert Basset, a younger son of Ralph Basset, first Baron of Weldon, obtained a grant of the manors of *Burncester* and *Wreckwic*.

10. About the same time, Baron Gerard de Camville obtained a grant of *Middleton* manor.

NORMAN CASTLES.

Though the land of this district thus passed to these new possessors, there was as yet for some years nothing outward or visible to tell of the great confiscation. But presently the badge of conquest began to appear. The Norman barons had long been acquainted with the policy of building castles as bulwarks against strangers, and against one another, and this policy they introduced into England.

King William built very many castles; but at the beginning of the twelfth century, during the anarchy of King Stephen's reign, the passion for castle-building grew to such a height that every rich man in this country built for himself a castle on his estate, whereby, before the end of that reign, their number is said to have amounted to 1,115. And in this matter, as in everything

[†] Kennett's P. A., Anno M CXIII.

[†] There is mention of William de Say among the followers of Duke William into England.

else, the Normans did but build on English foundations¹. They utilized the spots which they found ready to their hands, entrenched and fortified; and where the English had dug their ditches and thrown up their mounds, there then arose the walls, and towers, and keeps of the Norman lords. Three castles were at that time built within this district².

MIDDLETON.

The barons, Gerard de Camville, and his son, Richard de Camville, were both strong adherents of King Stephen; and one of them, probably the first, who was living in 1140, built a castle on his estate at *Middleton* on the site of the old English encampment still existing there.

MIXBURY.

At the time of the Norman Conquest, *Misseberie* had become the most populous and valuable of all the estates within this district, with the single exception of *Burncestre*. As it is mentioned in Domesday as the first of Roger of Ivery's possessions, it was probably at that time considered the head or chief place of his barony, "The Honour of Ivery." Here, therefore, he, or one of his descendants, soon built a castle. The old English camp afforded an eligible site, more than half ready for this purpose. This was named by the Normans "Beaumont," just as the rising-ground near the castle at Oxford was called by the same name. Within the fosse of the Beaumont, therefore, a castle of considerable size was built.

ARDLEY.

On the site of another of the old English camps a third castle was built at *Ardulveslie*, by one of the Earls of Chester.

This neighbourhood was, at this early period, especially attractive, from its nearness to the extensive forest of Burnwood. Here was afforded not only abundance of fuel and food for swine, but ample scope for the pleasures of the chase. King William I. retained the palace and manor of Brill as a royal demesne, just as it had been held by Edward the Confessor. King Henry II. held a court there in 1160 (when Becket attended him as Chancellor), and again in 1162; and King John spent the Christmas of 1205 there. At the same period, all the estates in the adjacent parishes were held by persons of high rank and of large possessions.

NORMAN CHURCHES.

A further and more lasting consequence of the Norman Conquest was the erection of new churches. The cause of this was not so much that the English churches had fallen into decay, as that, to the spirit which was awakened in the Norman lords in England, they appeared small and insignificant. A great era of church-building then set in, and that on a scale far larger than had before been seen in this country, so that, according to William of Malmesbury's statement, "you might see churches rise in every village, and monasteries in the towns and cities, built after a style unknown before." This new style was that which, brought originally from Italy, had been recently developed in Normandy, and which had been first brought into England by King Eadward, when he rebuilt the West Minster. The Norman castles have gone, but the Norman churches, or many parts of them, still survive. Remains of Norman architecture (1100—75) are visible at

¹ See Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxvi. p. 647.

² Beyond this district there were, in King Stephen's

reign, castles at Adderbury, Brackley, Deddington, Evenley, King's Sutton, at Grove Mill, between Bodicot and Bloxham, &c.

EARLY HISTORY.

AMBROSDEN.

A small plain Norman door on the north side of the present church.

BICESTER.

The chancel has Norman walls, and the rood-arch, and the two arches on the west side of it, are early Norman.

BUCKNELL.

The existing tower, between the nave and chancel, is plain early Norman (with a Perpendicular storey added on the top).

CAVERSFIELD.

The font is Norman, round, with intersecting arcade round the upper part, of rude and early character; as is also the piscina, plain. The chancel-arch has parts of the Norman imposts remaining, partly cut away (and Perpendicular cap-mouldings inserted over them). The outer doorway of the north porch has good late Norman mouldings and shafts, with scalloped capitals. The inner doorway is plain Norman; the pillars supporting them are transition from Norman.

FRINGFORD.

The south doorway and two of the nave-arches are Norman.

FRITWELL.

The chancel-arch (now removed from its original position, and placed in a recess on the north side,) and both the doorways are good Norman. The north has the cable moulding for a dripstone, with good terminations; the south has curious sculpture in the head.

KIRTLINGTON.

The walls of the chancel and tower are Norman (having been rebuilt after the original design).

MIXBURY.

The south doorway is good Norman, the arch enriched with zigzags, and with shafts set rather far back, with cushion capitals, and curious Runic crosses on the impost-stones of the arch within the capitals.

NEWTON.

A good Norman doorway (lately removed from the north to the south side). It is engraved in Skelton.

SOULDERN.

The tower is early Norman, having walls of great thickness.

STOKE.

The chancel has three small early Norman windows, and a Norman doorway and rood-arch. The south door is good Norman, with a niche over it.

WESTON.

The lower part of the tower is Norman, the upper part Decorated.

TRANSITION FROM NORMAN TO EARLY ENGLISH (1175—1200).

In the last quarter of the twelfth century the architecture of the round arch began to give way to that of the pointed arch, the use of which was doubtless brought back to Western Europe by the Crusaders. It is almost impossible to define this style, some buildings erected in it being almost Norman, with just a beginning of change; others almost Early English, with just a last lingering remnant of Norman work. Instances of this transition appear in the churches of

CHESTERTON.

The nave has on its north side three transition Norman arches, pointed, plain, not recessed, but slightly chamfered, on round pillars, with Norman scalloped caps. The font is plain round Norman.

LAUNTON.

The nave has transition Norman arches.

MIDDLETON.

The doorways, the chancel-arch, and the arches on the north side of the nave are good transition Norman: outer arch square-edged, with label over it; shaft round, with a Norman cap; inner arch has round mouldings on each edge, and the tooth-ornament boldly and well cut in the hollow moulding between them. The inner doorway of south porch is rich late Norman, with varieties of the zigzag moulding, and singular foliage in the head.

SOMERTON.

The chancel-arch is transition Norman. There are four transition Norman arches on the north side of the nave, and two, but with different mouldings, on the south side¹.

HUNDRED OF PLOUGHLEY.

The great local divisions of England, its shires, hundreds, and manors, are in most cases, at the present time, nearly identical with those which William the Conqueror found existing in the land; but the hundred within which this district is now situated is in this respect exceptional. An alteration was evidently made not long after the Norman Conquest, whereby the villages, hitherto attached to several hundreds, were grouped under one. The present hundred is unusually large², and differs from every other in Oxfordshire, in that it takes its name, not from a town or village, but like the hundreds in the northern and midland counties, from the meeting-place of its court. No village in this district, in the twelfth century, had become of sufficient local importance, nor was any conveniently situated, to serve for the latter purpose; but in its north-west corner a spot was easily accessible, roads from every part converging thither. It was, too, a well-known and venerated spot, from the barrow there thrown up; and so this was chosen as that where the court of the newly-formed hundred could be most suitably held.

¹ These particulars are taken from Part I. of a "Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford, Deanery of Bicester," and Part IV. of "The Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England, Oxfordshire," published by Mr. Parker, Oxford, 1842 and 1850.

² The Domesday Survey gives the names of six hundreds

only in Oxfordshire: *Levecanole* (Lewknor), *Peritone* (Perton), *Dorchestre*, *Primo Gadre*, *Secundo Gadre*, and the half of *Besintone* (Bensington), but it mentions nineteen in all, whose names it does not record. The modern hundreds amount to fourteen only, so that it is certain that five of those existing at the time of the Survey have been absorbed in the present ones.

The modern name of this hundred is Ploughley, and it is not easy to be sure what its exact original form may have been. The first known occurrence of the name is in the Great Roll of the Pipe (1 Rich I., A.D. 1189), where it is written *Pokedelawaha*^a. In the Hundred Rolls of Henry III. it is spelt *Powedelowe*, and in those of Edward I. *Pothou*, *al^o Ploudhleghe*, or occasionally *Poghede*. Now the last syllable in all these forms is, without doubt, *hlæw* = 'low,' which means a mound, either natural or artificial, and often of a sepulchral character. The first syllable is doubtful, and can only be conjectured to be the name of the person buried beneath it, *Pokede* or *Pough*. Who he may have been it is impossible to say; but we know that there were Anglo-Saxon names of this kind, as, e.g., the Northumbrian Comes, *Puck*, mentioned by Bede, the eponymous heroes of *Pucklechard* and *Poxwell*, and many other similar ones. The name, therefore, bears witness that the mound, to which it was given on the latest use of it, belonged to some Englishman, not a Roman or Briton, and means literally the mound or burial-place of *Pokede* or *Pough*.

DIOCESE OF LINCOLN.

In a Council held at St. Paul's in London, in 1075, it was ordered, in accordance with the wise policy of the Normans, to remove all episcopal sees from small towns and villages to places of larger population. Sherborne was then immediately transferred to Salisbury; Selsey to Chichester; Lichfield to Coventry; and ten years later, Dorchester to Lincoln^b, then "a great mart for men coming to it, both by land and sea." There, on the very highest point of the city, side by side with the castle, which was already rising to curb the haughty burghers, Remigius erected a church for his cathedral, of a grandeur and vastness of which the people before had no conception. Thus, from about this time, A.D. 1086, until the foundation of the Bishoprick of Oxford, in 1542, this district formed a part of that largest of all the dioceses of England, which extended as far northwards as Yorkshire, and included nearly the whole of what we now term the midland district, between the Thames and the Humber.

The choice of a deacon to be the constant attendant and assistant of the bishop prevailed in every Church from a very early date, but there is no mention of the office of archdeacon in England until the time of Ethelhard, Archbishop of Canterbury, 793—805. He appears to have first instituted the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, and after this example several archdeaconries were gradually created in each diocese. The first known name of the archdeacons of this district occurs after the Norman Conquest,—Alfred, Archdeacon of Oxford, living in 1092^c.

RURAL DEANERIES.

At some date unknown, but subsequent to the Norman Conquest, the rural deaneries of this district were changed. The deanery of Cuddesdon still retained the parishes of Ambresdon and

^a "Id. vic redd. comp de iij^o. de *Pokedelawaha-h8r* 7 mur8r 7 9 cel."

The same name occurs twice under *De oblati curie*.

^b "Dorchester in Oxon has been at different times the seat of two distinct bishoprics, the one West Saxon, the other Mercian. The first bishopric of Dorchester was that which began under Birinus in 634. Dorchester was then a central point of the West Saxon dominion, which then stretched a long way north of the Thames, while it did not stretch so far westward as it did afterwards. This great diocese, allowing for probable fluctuations of its boundaries, owing to the wars of the West Saxons with

the Mercians on the one side, and the Britons on the other, lasted till the division of 705. It had been for a moment divided under Cenweath, and the see had been removed by Haldde to Winchester. Dorchester then ceased to be an episcopal see, and it did not again become such in the ninth century. Then Mercia had long reached to the Thames, and Dorchester became the seat of a Mercian diocese, that whose seat was removed to Lincoln by Remigius in the days of the Conqueror."—Letter of E. A. Freeman, Esq., printed in *The Times* newspaper, Aug. 28, 1874.

^c Le Neve, p. 165.

Merton, but the deaneries of *Kirklington* and *Islip* were merged into that of *Burcester*, the latter deanery from that time losing its original complement of ten churches, and consisting of thirty-two, viz., those which formerly had made up the three separate deaneries, and the two additional churches of *Hethe* and *Souldern*, which had been founded subsequently to the first formation of the deaneries^d.

At a later period, after the year 1292, but before the reign of Henry VIII., the parishes of *Ambresdon* and *Merton* were added to the deanery of *Burcester*^e. In the meanwhile the church of *Stratton* had become a chapel dependent on *Burcester*, and the chapels of *Hampton Gay* and *Piddington* had been built. The deanery of *Burcester* thus, for about three centuries, contained thirty-three churches and three dependent chapels.

After the Reformation, the churches of *Shelswell* and *Tusmore* were allowed to fall into ruin, and were pulled down. Quite recently, by an arrangement made by Bishop Wilberforce, the deanery of *Islip* has been revived, and the five churches of *Bletchington*, *Charlton*, *Hampton Poyle*, *Islip*, *Oddington*, and the chapel of *Hampton Gay*, have been restored to it; and the church of *Lillingstone Lovell* has been added to the deanery of *Buckingham*, in which it is locally situated; while the church of *Caversfield*, now consolidated with *Stoke-Lyne*, has been placed in the deanery of *Bicester*. The present deanery of *Bicester*, therefore, consists of twenty-eight churches, and the chapel-of-ease still more recently built at *Fewcot*.

PATRONAGE OF CHURCHES.

The rebuilding of the parish churches by the Norman lords gave to them and their successors the right of patronage. It had been one of the laws of the Emperor Justinian, published in 541 and 543, that all persons who built churches, or endowed them with tithes and offerings, or settled manse or glebe upon them, should possess the right of presenting to the bishop for institution such clerks as they might choose to nominate, and that this right should descend in perpetuity to their heirs. The conferring of such benefits partook of the nature of a contract. Each benefactor of a parish church was at first called its founder (*fundator*), in case he had built it; also its defender (*defensor*), because it was his duty to defend what he had benefited from wrong; also its advocate (*advocatus*, whence comes the word 'advowson'), because his church stood to him in the relation of a client, whose cause he was bound to take up and plead; also, in far later times, as combining the two last duties, its patron (*patronus*), a word derived from Roman law, because he was bound to defend, protect, and assist his church, just as the old Roman *patronus* was bound to act towards

^d "And as hundreds and tithings kept their name, when they bare no longer a strict relation to the number of villages or people, so likewise the rural deaneries continued, when they lost their first allusion to 10 parishes or churches, and the district of them was contracted or enlarged at the pleasure of the bishop. Though some deaneries do still retain the primitive allotment of 10 churches, especially in Wales, where the most ancient usages continue; in the diocese of St. Asaph, the deaneries of *Bromfield*, and *Yale*, and *Kidwen*; in *Bangor* diocese, the deaneries of *Llin* and *Llywn*; in the diocese of *Llandaff*, the deanery of *Usk*; in that of *St. David's*, the deanery of *Emlin*, have the precise number of 10 parish churches; and several other deaneries, that upon their new division were made up of 2 conjoined, or 3 contracted

into 2 or 1, do now contain the number of 15, 20, or 30 according to the division so made; as, e.g., the present deanery of *Burcester* is made up of 31 parish churches, of which, the one church of *Ambrosden* being excepted, as before the Reformation being in the deanery of *Codesdon*, the remaining 30 do expressly answer the 3 distinct deaneries of *Curtlington*, *Islip*, and *Burcester*, of which the 2 former were annexed to the latter."—*Dansey's Hore Decanice Rurales*, vol. i. p. 97.

This statement is substantially correct, but needs, as will be seen, some modifications.

^e They are reckoned in *Cuddesdon* Deanery in *Pope Nicholas' Taxation*, but in *Burcester* Deanery in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1534).

the client whose suit he conducted in a court of justice, or the slave who was manumitted, so long as he continued in his service. In return for these benefits certain privileges were assigned to the patron: 1. the right of presentation; 2. some special dignities within the church, such as that of being met at the door by a procession, and conducted to a seat of honour, usually in the chancel; and 3. a claim to maintenance from the church property, if he or his descendants fell into poverty. These duties and privileges have been summed up in the well-known lines:—

“Patronum faciunt dos, ædificatio, fundus:
Præsentet; præsit; defendat; alatur egenus.”

Thus, though might, not right, gave to the Norman lords their manors, their own pious liberality gained for them the advowsons of their parish churches. In the single case of *Haiford* (Lower Heyford), there were two patrons of the church, because the lords of the two separate estates had in some way become its benefactors.

ASSIGNMENT OF CHURCHES TO MONASTERIES.

The terms descriptive of a patron's office imply a duty to be done, and not a profit to be enjoyed; and shew how far the old idea of church patronage was removed from the low and miserable invention of recent times, which regards advowsons and next presentations as saleable commodities for the benefit of their holders. The early patrons in many cases so felt the responsibility of their sacred trust that they sought to relieve themselves of it by assigning it to some religious house. Thus the advowsons of the following eighteen churches were at different dates in the course of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries assigned to monasteries; that of Langeton being already in the hands of Westminster Abbey:—

Ambresdon	to the	College of Asherugge.	Haiford, moie- }	to the	Abbey of Eynesham.
Burncester	„	Priory of Burncester.	ty of		
Caversfield	„	Abbey of Missenden.	Hardwick	„	{ Hospital of St. John of Jeru-
Chesterton	„	{ Chapel of St. George in Oxford	Kirklington	„	salem.
		Castle.	Merton	„	Abbey of Aunay.
Cotesford	„	Abbey of Bec.	Middleton	„	Abbey of Eynesham.
Fertwell	„	Priory of St. Frideswide.	Newton	„	Abbey of Barlings.
Finmere	„	Abbey of St. Augustine in Bristol.	Stratton	„	Priory of Burncester.
Goddington	„	Abbey of Elnestowe.	Souldern	„	Priory of Burncester.
Hethe	„	Priory of Kenilworth.	Weston	„	Abbey of Eynesham.
					Chapel of St. George.

PRIVATE PATRONAGE.

The advowsons of the other churches of this district (Ardley, Bucknell, Fringford, Upper Heyford, Shelswell, Stoke, Somerton, Tusmore, and Wendlebury) remained with the lords of these several manors, and so passed as appendant to them. The only exception to this was in the case of Mixbury, where, on the occasion of Roger of Ivery being dispossessed of his estates, a separation was made between the manor and the advowson, the king granting the former to Geoffrey of Ivery, the brother of Roger, and the latter to Ralph Basset, the justiciary and lord of Burncester Manor, in whose possessions it was in 1107. The advowson of Mixbury Church thus became not “appendant,” but “in gross,” as a right subsisting by itself, belonging to a person, and not a manor.

No record of any advowson in England being offered for sale occurs before the twelfth century, when Pope Alexander III., and afterwards Pope Innocent IV., protested against it. The first instance of such in this district occurred in 1348, when William de Pecks, the Rector of Bucknell, purchased the advowson of his church of Sir R. de Amory, the lord of the manor, for a hundred marks, and in the following year, on his own resignation, presented a successor to it.

DEDICATION OF CHURCHES.

The parish churches forming the present deanery of Bicester were distinguished by the following dedications:—

The Holy Trinity,—Goddington.

St. Mary the Virgin,—Ambresdon, Ardley, Chester-ton, Cottisford, Hardwick, Upper Heyford, Lower Heyford, Kirklington, Launton, Souldern, Stratton, Weston.

St. Peter,—Bucknell, Stoke.

St. James,—Somerton.

St. Michael,—Finmere, Fringford, Newton.

All Saints,—Middleton, Mixbury.

St. Edburg,—Bicester.

St. Ebba or St. Ebbe,—Shelswell.

St. Giles,—Wendlebury.

St. George and St. Edmund[†],—Hethe.

St. Lawrence,—Caversfield.

St. Nicholas,—Piddington.

St. Olave,—Fritwell.

St. Swithin,—Merton.

The Patron Saint of the remaining church, Tusmore, is not known.

These, like other dedications, were no doubt regulated by the personal predilections of the founders, the clergy, and others interested in the several churches. The dedication to St. Ebba is common to Shelswell and Oxford in this county; the dedications to St. Swithin, St. Olave, St. Edburg, St. George and St. Edmund combined[‡], are peculiar, there being no other dedications to these saints in Oxfordshire; the dedication to St. Nicholas is late, he being the favourite saint of the Dominicans. Of the rest, it may be observed that churches dedicated to St. Giles generally stood near the entrance to a town or village, those to St. Nicholas by a river-side, and those to St. Michael on an hill.

Of the nine churches dedicated to St. Mary, three were consecrated at dates, of which we have certain record: that at Kirklington before the Norman Conquest; that at Chesterton in 1238; and that at Weston in 1273. The remaining six were probably all consecrated in or about the interval which elapsed between these two last mentioned years[§].

[†] Ecton and Browne Willis combine here St. George and St. Edward (the Confessor.)

[‡] The chapel in Oxford Castle was dedicated to St. George, as is also Kencot church in Oxon, but to him alone.

[§] The beginning of the thirteenth century was remarkable for the great development given by the preaching of St. Bernard to the worship of the Blessed Virgin. At that time the choirs of our cathedrals began to be lengthened to form lady-chapels and altars to be set up to her honour.

"On the death of Hugh de Wells in 1235, Robert Grosseteste, or Greathead, the most famous bishop of the mediæval Church of England, succeeded to the see of Lincoln. One of the first acts of his episcopate was to

make, and thereby set an example of, a systematic visitation of his whole diocese. Part of the business of his primary visitation was to consecrate such churches as had not been formerly dedicated to God. A letter of his, bearing no date, but probably belonging to the first year of his episcopate, A.D. 1236, exists, in which he directs the Archdeacon of Lincoln to give notice to the rectors of unconsecrated churches that they provide for their consecration within the two next following years, according to the canons of a council lately held in London. Many churches, therefore, and especially in Oxfordshire, were now consecrated by Bishop Grosseteste and his coadjutor, William Brewer, Bishop of Exeter."—*Kennett's P. A.*

CHAPELS AND CHANTRIES.

In addition to the parish churches there arose up at a later date some chapels or oratories: a hermit's chapel, called "The Chapel of St. Cross," on Muswell Hill, at the beginning of the twelfth century, or perhaps a few years earlier; a second, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, at Bicester, in the thirteenth century; and a private chapel attached to the manor-house at Bigenhulle, and served by the clergy of the Priory at Bicester. Chantries, or small chapels appropriated to the performance of services for the dead, and possessing a separate endowment, were attached to the churches of Bicester and Somerton.

VILLAGE FEASTS.

From the dedications of the churches there have come down, through the vista of many centuries, the 'Feasts,' which are still held annually in every village of this district. In the fourth and fifth centuries it became customary on the return of the day on which the parish church had been consecrated, to keep up the remembrance of it by an anniversary festival, at which the parishioners met together for special religious services, and also for friendly social meetings. The original object of these dedication festivals was 1. thankfully to commemorate the pious bounty of the founders of the church; 2. to excite others to like acts of piety; and 3. to maintain unity and charity among the parishioners. But Gregory the Great had introduced into England a custom which, though well intended in principle, led to much evil in practice. Bede tells us, that in his letters to Augustine and Mellitus, Pope Gregory ordered them to allow the people, on the annual feast of the dedication of such churches as had been converted from heathen temples, to build huts of the boughs of trees about these churches, and there feast and entertain themselves, in lieu of the old orgies which they used to observe when they were heathens¹. This opened the door to the gradual profanation of these dedication festivals. Promiscuous crowds from the neighbouring villages soon flocked in. Pedlars and hawkers came to sell their wares; and such disorders followed, that all the old solemnities were driven first out of the church, and then out of the churchyard.

For the purposes of these yearly feasts, and other like parish gatherings, such as Church Ales, Clerk Ales, &c., small houses were built in almost every place near the church, where the apparatus needed for cooking and brewing was kept, and where the meat, and beer, and other accessories of a feast, were prepared. These were called "The Church House" in each parish.

Some changes have been made in the times of observing these Feasts. At first the day of consecration, and some days immediately following it, were observed; but after a few years the dedication festival was changed to the Sunday next, before or after, the festival of the Saint whose name the church bears, on the ground that the people were then most at liberty to attend the church services. Thus arose the custom of each feast beginning on a Sunday.

In the parishes, where the churches were dedicated to St. Mary, the Feasts have been subjected to more changes than in others. Since A.D. 994 the eighth of September was long observed in commemoration of "The Nativity of the Virgin Mary," as the record still stands in our Calendar; and, in the later days of Roman superstition, August 26 came to be observed in honour of the supposed "Assumption of the Virgin," and for some years this festival superseded the older one of the Nativity. Accordingly, around these two days, at more or less distance, most of the village feasts congregate in the parishes mentioned.

¹ Bingham's *Antiquities*, vol. ii. chap. ix. § 14; Hook's "Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury," vol. i. chap. ii.

At the Reformation, in A.D. 1537, a decree of Convocation was sanctioned by the Crown, which directed that all dedication-feasts throughout England should be celebrated on one and the same day, the first Sunday in October. This order was only partially obeyed, but it accounts for the change from the original day to that time of the year which is observed in some parishes.

Hence we may conclude that in those parishes where the feasts begin on a Sunday distant from Michaelmas, they are still observed on the day originally fixed ; but that where they are kept at, or about, Old or New Michaelmas, they have been changed from the proper festival of the saint, to whom the church is dedicated, and are therefore irregularly kept.

CHURCH OR LAMB ALE.

An exception to this rule is found in two parishes of this district, in which the original dedication-feast is altogether lost in another which has taken its place. Various expedients were adopted in very early times towards meeting the expenses of the parish church, and other local charges. A common one was for the churchwardens to brew a quantity of ale or beer (the malt being a free gift from the parishioners) at the church-house, and then to sell it to the people, when they met together to keep a holiday. Other feasting and amusements gradually grew up around these 'Church Ales,' as they were called. At Kirtlington, and the adjoining parish of Chesterton, a custom was introduced of providing a lamb each year as part of the entertainment. This yearly merry-making was then called the 'Lamb Ale,' being celebrated at Kirtlington on Whit-Monday, and at Chesterton on Trinity-Monday. It has not seldom led to much dissipation and other serious evil ; and, its original intention being now entirely lost sight of, would be more honoured in the breach than it is in the observance.

INCOMES OF CHURCHES.

The maintenance of the churches and clergy was provided for 1. by the voluntary offerings of the people, made daily or weekly at the altar, or cast at other times into the ark or box of the church ; and 2. in the fourth century, by the payment of tithes and first-fruits. These all were, in the earliest times, paid to the bishop of the diocese, who, with the advice and consent of his presbyters, distributed them at first as occasion seemed to require ; and subsequently, according to the order generally adopted in the Western Church, in four portions : 1. to the bishop ; 2. to the priest ; 3. to the poor ; 4. to the repair of the fabric of the church, of each parish. Thus, until about the year 700, the first missionary clergy of this district, settled in their common home at Dorchester, were maintained out of the revenues of the cathedral church. The bishops soon, receiving sufficient provision from the lands and other profits of their own churches, ceased to accept or distribute the parochial tithes and offerings. This duty then generally devolved upon the parish priests, and, in places where there was no church or resident clergyman, and even long after these had been provided, upon the lords of manors. A door was thus opened for the alienation of the revenues belonging to the parish churches. Lords of manors, finding themselves in possession of the tithes of their parishes, frequently gave a portion of them, generally one or both of the two portions assigned to the relief of the poor and the repair of the parish church, to some religious house ; and when they further gave away the advowsons of the churches to the same, they prepared the way for that still larger appropriation of ecclesiastical property which followed, when the monasteries took to their own use all the great tithes and offerings, leaving only the smaller ones to their vicars.

The value of the various churches of this district, and of those portions of their revenues which had been assigned to, or appropriated by, the monasteries, at two periods in the thirteenth century,

has been preserved. In 1253, Pope Innocent IV. granted to King Henry III. the first-fruits and tenths of all ecclesiastical benefices in England for three years. This occasioned a valuation of the benefices, which was made in the following year, and, from being undertaken by the Bishop of Norwich, is known as "The Norwich Taxation." In 1288, Pope Nicholas IV. granted a similar gift to King Edward I. for six years, towards the expenses of an expedition to the Holy Land, and this led to a second valuation, completed in 1291. The valuation of the churches, as given in Pope Nicholas' Taxation, is also stated in the valuation of the ninth taken in 1341. From these we obtain the earliest accounts of the value of Church property.

DEANERY OF CUDES DON.

Churches.	Norwich Taxation.			P. Nicholas' Tax.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Ambresdon	20	0	0	26	3	4
Meryton, with pension deducted	10	0	0	11	6	8
The pension of Eynesham Abbey in the same				1	10	0

DEANERY OF BURNCESTRE.

Ardeley, with pension deducted				4	6	8
Blechesdon				10	10	0
Burncestre, with pensions deducted	10	0	0	12	0	0
The portion of the Abbey of Aunay in the same				1	6	8
The portion of the Abbey of Oseney in the same				2	0	0
The portion of the Abbey of Eynesham in the same				0	12	0
The vicarage of the same	1	10	0	2	13	4
Bukenhulle, with pension deducted	7	6	8	10	0	0
The portion of the Abbey of Oseney in the same				0	10	0
Cesterton	8	0	0	10	13	4
Cherlton				20	0	0
Cotesford				2	13	4
The pension of the Prior of Okeburn in the Church of Cotesford in tithes				0	13	4
Finemere				8	0	0
Feryngford, with portion deducted				6	0	0
The pension of the Prior of Coges in the same				1	6	8
Fretewelle				8	13	4
Godindon	2	13	4	4	6	8
Hampton Bridge				3	13	4
Hampton Gaye (chapel dependent)				2	0	0
Herdwic				1	13	4
The portion of the Abbey of Oseneye in the Church of Herdwic in tithes				0	6	8
Hethe				6	13	4
Heyford-at-the-Bridge. This Church has two Rectors.						
The portion of the Rector of the patronage of Roger de Lylle				5	0	0
The portion of the Rector of the patronage of the Abbey of Eynesham, with portion deducted				5	0	0
The portion of the Abbey of Eynesham in the Church of Heyford-at-the-Bridge				1	0	0
Heyford Waryn, with portion deducted				5	13	4
The portion of the Abbey of Oseneye in the same				1	10	0
Islip				10	13	4
Curtlington, with portion deducted				20	0	0

Churches.	Norwich Taxation.			P. Nicholas' Tax.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
The portion of the Abbey of Oseneye in the same	.	.	.	0	13	4
The vicarage of the same	.	.	.	4	6	8
Lylyngstan	.	.	.	8	0	0
Langeton	.	.	.	2	13	4
Midelinton	.	.	.	5	6	8
Mixebure, with portion deducted	.	.	.	10	13	4
The portion of the Abbey of Oseneye in the same	.	.	.	1	10	0
Newton	.	.	.	2	13	4
Otyngdon	.	.	.	6	13	4
Schaldeswell	.	.	.	2	13	4
Somerton, with portion deducted	.	.	.	6	13	4
The portion of the Abbey of Oseneye in the same	.	.	.	0	6	8
Sulthorne, with portion deducted	.	.	.	10	0	0
The portion of the Abbey of Eynesham in the same	.	.	.	5	0	0
Stoke L'Isle	.	.	.	13	6	8
Stratton had become a chapel dependent on Burncestre.						
Torenesmere	.	.	.	6	0	0
Weston	.	.	.	9	6	8
Wendelebury	.	.	.	6	0	0

The total yearly revenues of the churches in the deanery of Burncestre amounted to £268 15s. 4d., as given in Pope Nicholas' Taxation.

ARCHITECTURE OF CHURCHES.

The churches of the present deanery of Bicester are of an interesting character^k. They are not grand buildings, like those which are to be seen in the fen districts of Lincolnshire and Cambridge-shire, or in the north-east parts of Northamptonshire; but, with far less outward appearance to attract, they are well worthy of a careful examination. Not only do they tell various details of the history of each village, but they also supply good instances of the four styles of Gothic architecture, which have prevailed in this country. The remains of the Norman period of architecture have been already mentioned.

During the greater part of the thirteenth century the Early English style, distinguished chiefly by its lancet-windows, prevailed; and good examples of it may be seen in the additions and improvements then made in the following churches:—

EARLY ENGLISH (1200—1275).

AMBROSDEN, tower.

BICESTER, arches on south side of nave.

BUCKNELL, chancel, with its fine eastern triplet-window, and nave (two good doorways).

CAVERSFIELD, chancel, arches on south side of nave.

FRINGFORD, south porch.

FRITWELL, chancel, nave, and tower.

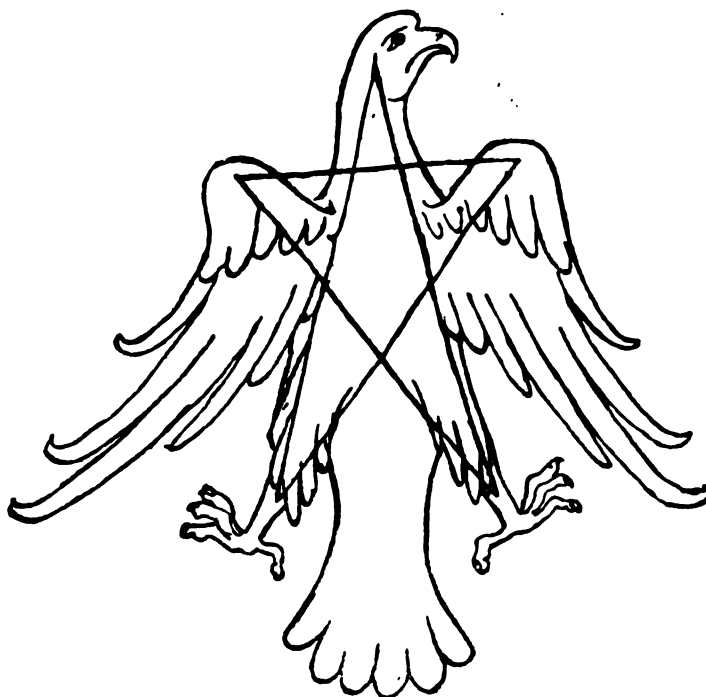
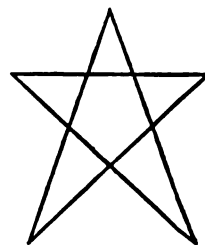
KIRTLINGTON, nave-arches.

^k The particulars which follow are gathered from Part I. of "A Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford" (1841), and Part IV. of "The Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England" (1850), published by Mr. Parker, of Oxford.

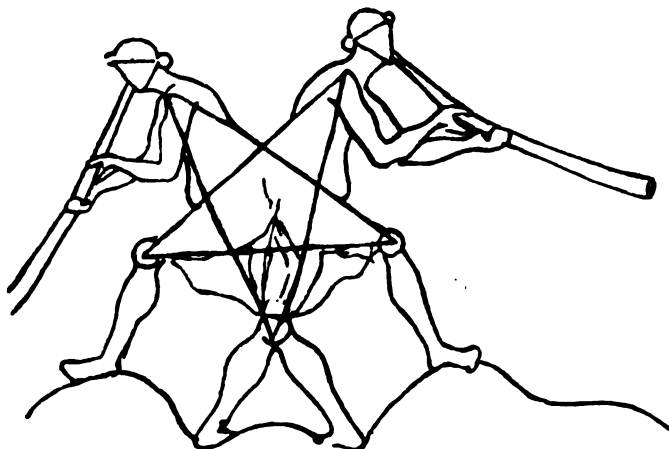
LAUNTON, tower.

MIDDLETON, tower (good specimen), and south porch.

On the towers of Ambrosden and Launton churches may be seen a five-angled figure, called a 'pentagram' or 'pentangle,' formed of hewn stone, and slightly projecting from the outside wall. This figure is either a Masonic symbol, or the geometrical outline of some intended sculpture. The note-book of Wilars de Honecort (date probably 1243—51) throws light upon the practical use of this particular figure. In Plate XXXV. of that book it is used for a man's face and for an eagle.



In Plate XXXVI. for two figures blowing trumpets¹.



¹ In Plates XXXIV. and XXXVI. of the same book there is another figure made of isosceles triangles, but after the same form, and for a like purpose.



If it was a symbol significant of some secret in the craft of the Guild of Freemasons, it implies that these two towers were built by members of that fraternity. This symbol has been adopted by the comparatively modern society of Freemasons, and has a mysterious meaning attached to it by them, far beyond anything that entered into the minds of the old and real Masons.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century the style of building became more ornamented, foliated circles and other geometrical forms being introduced into windows, doorways, and other parts. Of this there are many examples :—

DECORATED, EARLY, WITH GEOMETRICAL TRACERY (1275—1325).

CHESTERTON, chancel, with sedilia and tower.

MIXBURY, chancel, nave, and tower.

PIDDINGTON, chancel (very good) and gable cross.

SOULDERN, south aisle windows.

STRATTON AUDLEY, north aisle of nave.

Of the more advanced period of the Decorated style the examples are also numerous and fine.

DECORATED, LATE, WITH FLOWING TRACERY (1325—1375).

AMBROSDEN, nave and south aisle (very rich and good).

ARDLEY, chancel and tower.

BICESTER, north aisle of nave.

CHESTERTON, south aisle and clerestory of nave.

FINMERE, chancel, nave, with clerestory windows, and tower.

FRITWELL, font.

HARDWICK, chancel.

HETHE, nave and chancel (very plain).

HEYFORD, LOWER, chancel.

MERTON, chancel, nave, and tower (nearly a perfect specimen).

MIDDLETON, chancel, and south side of nave.

SOMERTON, chancel, north doorway and porch, tower, font, and a singular reredos representing the Lord's Supper.

STOKE LYNE, tower.

WESTON, upper part of tower.

About the middle of the fourteenth century the Perpendicular style was introduced, and there are many additions and parts of churches built during its prevalence.

PERPENDICULAR (1375—1525).

AMBROSDEN, chancel and font.

BICESTER, tower.

BUCKNELL, clerestory.

HARDWICK, west window of nave.

HEYFORD, LOWER, nave, aisle, and tower.

HEYFORD, UPPER, tower and chancel.

KIRTLINGTON, clerestory.

LAUNTON, chancel and clerestory.

MERTON, clerestory.

PIDDINGTON, tower.

SOMERTON, chantry on south side of chancel, clerestory and roof.

STRATTON AUDLEY, tower.

Many windows inserted in nearly all the churches.

Of the following churches nearly all the old buildings are gone :—

ARDLEY, nave rebuilt at beginning of present century.

GODDINGTON, rebuilt, except tower, in 1792.

SHELLOW, church destroyed.

TUSMORE, church destroyed.

WENDLEBURY, rebuilt, except tower, in 1762.

WESTON, rebuilt, except tower, in 1743.

LOW SIDE-WINDOWS.

No part of our ancient churches has so completely baffled the enquiries of antiquaries, as the low side-windows, which are so frequently found near the west end of the chancel, usually on the south side, but sometimes on the north, and occasionally on both sides. Examples of these occur in all the periods of architecture, but prior to the thirteenth century they are rare. There are four good specimens of these windows in this district.

At Bucknell there is one on the north side of the chancel, lancet-shaped on the outside, with a square-headed opening within, and one on each side of the nave, near the east end, of a wide lancet form, with a round-headed recess over each on the inside. There were probably chantry-altars at each of the two latter places. These are all thirteenth-century work.

At Somerton, on the north side of the chancel, there is a singular example; the window is a single light, long and narrow, with decorated tracery in the head, divided by a thick transom, below which the opening does not appear to have been glazed. In the interior is a recess with a sort of shoulder, as if there had been a seat by the side of the opening, agreeing in this respect with one at Elsfield, in this county, and some others.

At Ardley there is, on the south side of the chancel, a square-headed window of two lights, with decorated tracery of a flowing character, the lights divided by a transom, below which are the low side-openings. These two last windows are fourteenth-century work.

At Hardwick there is also a small window of the same character.

The theories and conjectures that have been started to account for these openings are almost endless. They are said to have been—

1. Lychnoscopes, for the purpose of watching the Paschal light.
2. Confessionals.
3. For lepers to assist at Mass.
4. For excommunicate persons to do penance at.
5. To hold a light for scaring away evil spirits.
6. For the acolytes to pass the thurible through for blowing the charcoal into a red heat in the open air, before the incense was put in.
7. For the reception or distribution of alms.
8. To watch the approach of the priest before ringing the little bell to announce it to the people, the other windows being too high for that purpose.
9. For light to the reader of the lessons.

10. For ventilation only.
11. To symbolize the wound in the side of our Saviour on the Cross, the whole building being taken to represent His body^m.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE.

Of the Domestic architecture of the thirteenth century a specimen exists in the two wings, or square tower-like projections, with some windows and a chimney in the old Manor-house at Cottisford, which are original workⁿ. Of the fifteenth-century work there is an example in the Manor-house and barn adjoining at Upper Heyford, which were built about the time of William of Wykeham. The Manor-house at Merton was built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Manor-house at Fritwell is handsome, and is of the time of James I. There is also a Jacobean Manor-house (now much altered) at Weston.

CHURCH BELLS.

Bells were introduced into churches in England before the year 680, for in that year Bede mentions them as in use. In 829 King Egbert commanded every priest at the proper time to sound the bells of his church; and in 900 Pope John IX. ordered them to be rung "as a defence against thunder and lightning." Of the bells now existing in this district, the oldest is in the tower of Caversfield church, bearing date 1200.

CHURCHYARD CROSSES.

The first Christian missionaries generally erected a cross to mark and consecrate the places where they assembled their flocks. These places soon came to be surrounded by a bank and ditch, or other fence; and thus they became open-air sanctuaries, a few of which remained in this country until the Norman Conquest. When churches were built these enclosures became churchyards, and the cross became what we call a churchyard-cross. As the old wooden crosses decayed, others were substituted. These later crosses usually consisted of a stone pillar, surmounted by a cross, and fixed on a basement of three or more steps. In size and elaboration they varied considerably. Remains of such may be seen at Ambrosden, Bicester, Bucknell, Cottisford, Chesterton, Fritwell, Goddington, Launton, Merton, Stratton, Somerton, Souldern, Wendlebury, and Weston. That at Somerton is unusually fine, being above the usual height.

These crosses were used for many pious purposes. Persons before entering the church would often kneel and say a short prayer before them; and the parish priest, or one of the Itinerant Orders of monks, would also occasionally address the parishioners from their steps.

MARKET CROSSES.

The privilege of holding a market had been occasionally granted in Saxon times, but these grants were altogether suspended in the days immediately following the Norman Conquest, when the country was too unsettled to need or demand them. Each manor then grew only just enough corn for the maintenance of its own population. There was, consequently, no interchange of this as an article of trade: and it was quite possible for the inhabitants of one part of the country to have abundance, while those of another part were starving. But, as the production of corn, and then

ⁿ Article on Low Side-windows in vol. iv. of *Archæological Journal*, where there are engravings of the windows at Ardley and Somerton.

^m "An old house called Cottisford Farm has many interesting remains of antiquity."—*Shelton*.

of wool, increased, the privilege of holding markets and fairs within their manors was extorted from the king by the chief barons in the thirteenth century. Thus, in 1202, Gerard de Camville, the lord of Middleton, obtained the grant of a market to be held within that manor; and in 1293, another lord of the same manor, Earl Henry de Lacy, obtained a grant of a weekly market and a yearly fair in the same place. These were the earliest markets and fair established in this district after the Conquest. Similar grants became very common in the next century. P

It was customary to mark the site of a market by a stone cross. The market-cross at Middleton now stands just outside the entrance to the churchyard, to which spot it has, in recent years, been removed; and a similar one at Launton stood in the village, at a spot still called 'The Cross,' and is now preserved in the grounds of the rectory.

DESTROYED CHURCHES.

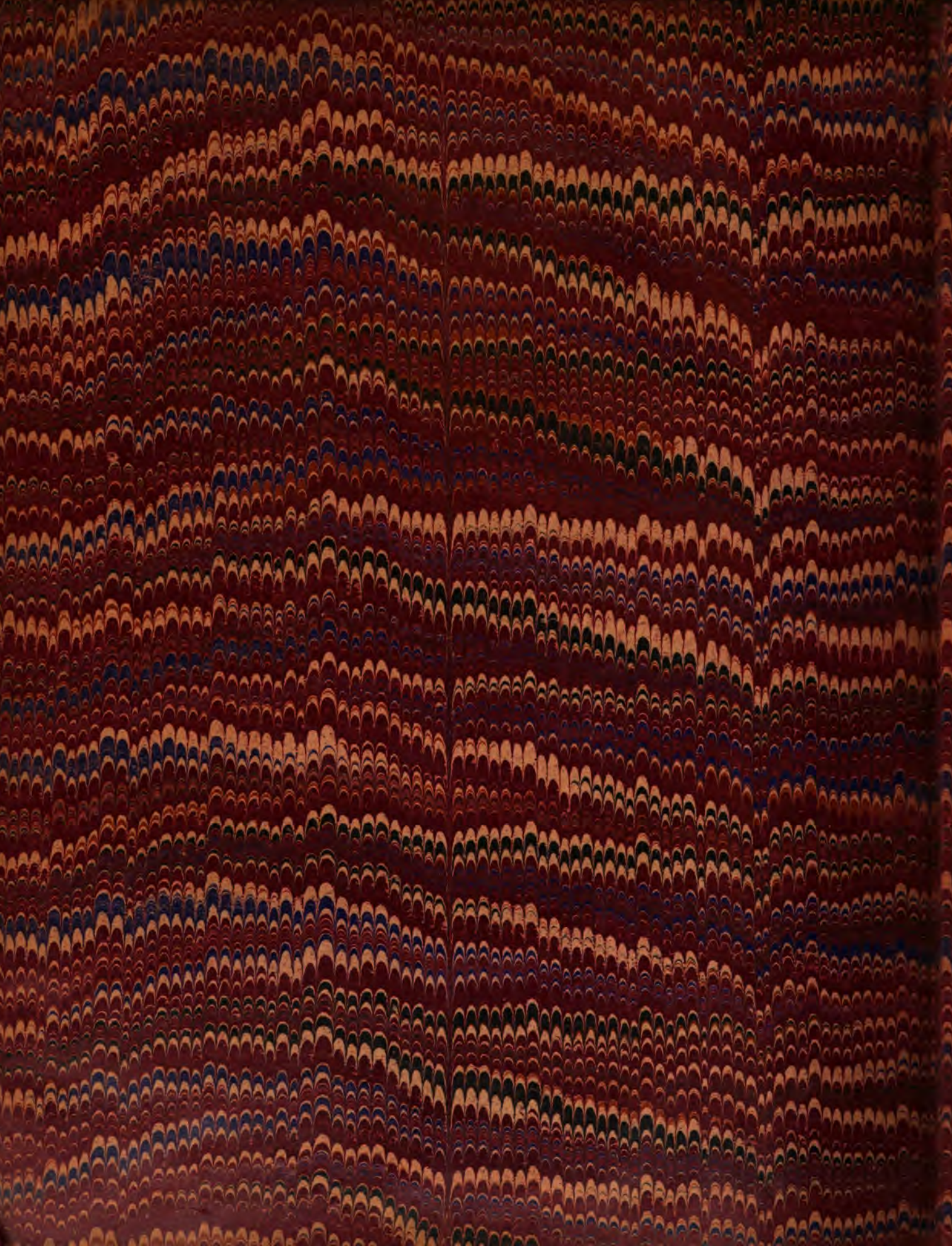
More old churches have been desecrated and destroyed in England than is often supposed. No one act of spoliation, like that of the monasteries, has swept them away, but their decay and ruin have been gradual, the mere result of parochial negligence, or of the covetousness of some private individual. The two churches of Shelswell and Tusmore have been thus lost to this district.

DESECRATED CEMETERIES.

Some of the ground originally assigned to the churches of Ambrosden and Bicester, and long used for burials, has been appropriated to the vicarage-houses of those parishes, human remains and stone coffins having been dug up on their sites and in the gardens attached to them.

Thus far the history of this district has been attempted in outline. From the point here reached it broadens and deepens into the various details of the separate histories of its twenty-eight parishes. These will fill up and finish the picture, of which we have given here the first sketch, each and all shewing how "the old order changeth, giving place unto the new," and adding another to the many proofs already existing, that each distinct locality is, in its changes, social, political, and religious, but a representation of our whole fatherland.

"There is no picking up a pebble by the brook-side, but we find all nature in connexion with it"—
Contemplations of Nature.



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